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## CURRENT COMMENT.

WHEN we said last week that Mr. Lloyd George's row-boat was drifting dangerously down a Niagara, we had no idea how near to the falls he really was. Only a few days after our words went into type, he toppled over the edge, and now he is gone. Next to Mr. Wilson, he appears to us to be the worst and most unprincipled of all those engaged in manipulating the war and the peace. Nevertheless, like Mr. Wilson, the world owes him something, for he did more than anyone to undermine public confidence in politics and parliamentary institutions, and to reveal the true nature and purpose of political organization. Aside from this, we do not know a single good thing that can be said of him, and we are therefore glad to say this. We may add, however, with justice, that we believe him to be no worse than any other practical politician would show himself under similar circumstances. His lack of integrity, his self-seeking, his incapacity for truth or loyalty in any form, are conspicuous chiefly because of the unusual opportunities which he had for the exercise of these qualities, and the unusual vulpine cleverness and dexterity with which he managed both his qualities and his opportunities. The lesson to be had from his career is that any politician as clever as Mr. George and with the opportunities that Mr. George has had at his disposal, would be another Mr. George; and it is only by taking this strictly impersonal view of such careers that one profits by them.

MR. HUGHES's invitation to the British Government to permit the American rum-navy to search British vessels beyond the three-mile limit has been politely but firmly declined. The efforts of our Government to put a stop to the practice of smuggling hard liquors into this country from Jamaica and the Bahamas are viewed by His Majesty's Government with "sympathetic consideration," but the three-mile limit is good enough for Downing Street. This reply was to be expected; it is in line with the best British tradition, according to which, if there is to be any visiting and searching on the high seas, it must be done by the British navy and no other. On occasion Britain has not hesitated to go to war in defence of this prerogative. We can remember that John Bull gave Brother Jonathan something of a thrashing over it some 110 years ago. In the present instance we hardly anticipate open hostilities, for it would be difficult for any American Government to raise much of an army to make the sea unsafe for intoxicants.

NONE the less, Mr. Daugherty's recent brash decision will most certainly cost us a pretty penny before we are through. The French Government is already preparing to fight against the idea of having its liquor-stocks on passenger vessels confiscated on their arrival here. French ship-owners have signed contracts with their sailors for a daily ration of rum, and neither party to the contract is inclined to break it because of our peculiar prejudices. In the case of vessels from Italy, Spain and Holland, such rationing-contracts are compulsory under the law. Under such circumstances our maritime prohibition policy is indeed a sea of troubles, and in addition we already have enough domestic litigation pending in the matter to cost the taxpayers a fortune in legal fees. The only happy feature of the situation is that the humiliation and the expense involved in this particular puritanical undertaking may help to bring to an end the wild orgy of repressive legislation with which we have been afflicted by a fanatical crew of self-constituted censors and professional moralists.

MR. HOOVER'S somewhat unexpected announcement that the European nations could and should pay their debts to the American taxpayers was greeted by a considerable outburst of hoots and catcalls in France. The idea that they should do anything more about the American debt than merely to acknowledge it "in principle" obviously seemed preposterous to many French statesmen. Yet Mr. Hoover's brusque words will be warmly applauded by a considerable part of our population as sound patriotic doctrine, and they will serve, in these pre-election days, in some measure as a political antidote for the news that has seeped out from the Treasury Department that a substantial part of the new internal bond-issue must be used to meet current expenses. Thus it must be suspected that Mr. Hoover is not altogether naïve in this matter, just as the canny bankers who pushed through their recent convention the resolution to let the debt go, were not altogether disinterested. The larger bankers have no inconsiderable mortgage on parts of Europe, they are well aware of the steady financial disintegration there, and if the sacrifice of the taxpayers' eleven and one-half billion dollars will help to make Europe safe for investments, the bankers will be thoroughly sensible and realistic about the matter.

WITH more than the *naïveté* of sweet sixteen, the Washington correspondent of the *New York Times* remarks that the American Government is not likely to make objection to the negotiation by the Government of Cuba of a new fifty-million-dollar loan—no more likely, we suppose, than a cat is to turn its back on a conveniently accessible canary. In a special dispatch to the *Times*, dated 22 August, the correspondent exhibited less ingenuousness, for he said that it was an open secret in Washington that if the Cuban Government had not undertaken to put through the "reforms" suggested by General Crowder, the Government of the United States would have intervened once more in the island. Even this statement is misleading, in a way, for the proposed "reforms" centred about a plan for the collection of additional revenues in Cuba, and the disbursement of these revenues in the United States, in the form of interest on a new bond-issue. The business of bringing pressure to bear upon the Cuban Government to secure the adoption of such a programme was in itself, of course, an act of intervention. All the loans hitherto negotiated by the Cuban Government have been floated in the United States:

\$35 million in 1904; \$16½ million in 1909; \$10 million in 1914; five million dollars in January of this year; and now that an additional issue of \$50 million has been voted, under compulsion, it is quite in order for the American Government to pat its stomach and say that it really does not mind.

SINCE the day, a good many weeks ago, when the Turks spilled over onto the front page of the daily press, we have been obliged to wade through a good many columns of news and nonsense on the vexed question of the Near East. In the course of our adventures, we have discovered one article which really helps to illuminate the situation, and with due acknowledgment to Mr. J. T. Walton Newbold and the *Labour Monthly* of London, we hereby seize upon and appropriate some of the information which that article contains. The armistice of 1918 was hardly signed, says Mr. Newbold, when "the British Trade-Corporation, a State-constituted and -chartered bank, took over the National Bank of Turkey and established the Levant Company to develop trade throughout the Near East. The Federation of British Industries, which had fathered the British Trade Corporation on the Government, appointed its first trade-commissioner, significantly enough, to Athens, where his address was given as c/o H. M. Embassy."

THIS seems, however, to have been only a beginning. Within the last few months, there have been disclosures of concessions obtained recently in Rumania by Sir Basil Zaharov; of other concessions in Greek Macedonia secured by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company; and of still other concessions, granted to Sir Robert MacAlpine and Sons, for the erection of harbour-works at the Piraeus, and probably also in the neighbourhood of Smyrna. According to Mr. Newbold, the Federation of British Industries was very largely the creation of the great munitions-makers, Vickers Ltd.; Sir Basil Zaharov, with his mysterious ancestry, his huge fortune, his Greek citizenship, and his British title, is the Paris representative of Vickers; while Sir Robert MacAlpine and Sons have regularly figured as contractors for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and for subsidiaries and associates of Vickers.

THESE three concerns, says Mr. Newbold, form with the Marconi interests "a group generally to be found acting in conjunction." We may add that the most obvious bond between the British Government and this little group of serious thugs is the controlling interest which the Government holds in the Anglo-Persian Company. The fragrant memory of Mr. Lloyd George's dealings in Marconi stocks reminds us, too, that the interest which members of the Government may have in these little matters need not always be purely impersonal. At any rate, it is sufficiently obvious that certain British corporations have been engaged recently in a brisk economic offensive in the Near East; likewise it is plain enough that the advance of the Turks against the Greeks figures more or less as a counter-attack against these British corporations; *ergo*, the interest of the British Government in the freedom of the Straits and the salvation of the Christians is perhaps not quite—but what is the use of rubbing it in? The Opposition will doubtless attend to that during the coming campaign.

In a discourse on "The Popularity of War," the editor of the London *Outlook* remarks that the pacifism of England is nothing more than the headache of the morning after; a war with Turkey would be unpopular all over the country, but the public could be propagandized into it, nevertheless; and, moreover, "there would not be the least difficulty in levying a voluntary army from the unemployed—or in officering it either, from another class of unemployed." The editor remarks, in his forthright way, that those who say that wars are the work of economic and political plotters are simply throwing dust in the eyes of fools. In this the *Outlook* may be right, but it hardly seems to us that the editor's conclusion in the

matter of the Anglo-Turkish quarrel is supported by the facts which he brings forward. It is perhaps easy, all too easy to popularize a war by means of propaganda, but where does the propaganda come from? It may be a very simple matter to militarize the unemployed, but how is the official machinery set in motion, and why are the men out of work and hungry?

We ourselves have never maintained that wars in general are deliberately cooked up; we believe rather that politicians and profiteers prefer to take their winnings without a war, when it is possible for them to do so. These gentry are leagued up, however, in a tight combination for the preservation at home, and the extension abroad, of an economic system which can not possibly be preserved and extended without causing domestic unemployment and inter-governmental conflict. As long as monopoly is maintained in Great Britain, and capital is exported in quantity to the Near East, there will be labourers in London who need food, and concessionaires in Constantinople who need protection. If the labourers were left to themselves, they might start a riot or even a revolution, but we can not conceive of their banding themselves together and sailing away to fight the Turks. The gullibility of the general public and the hunger of the unemployed certainly create conditions that are favourable to the popularization of war, but it requires something more than this to organize fleets and armies and set them in motion against a chosen enemy.

SECRETARY HUGHES, it seems to us, has been very effective in his attitude of suave dignity in the face of attempts by various sanguinary bishops to involve us in a war in the Near East. The Episcopal hierarchy, at its recent convention, passed a resolution inviting the Government to unsheathe the shining sword against Kemal; and a Methodist prelate, Bishop James Cannon, has been almost hysterical in his insistence that the Administration send the fleet and land armed forces on the shores of Asia Minor to hold the infidel at bay. In his epistles, the good bishop seems to assume that all the atrocities in the recent war, which the great Christian munitions-making nations so amiably acquiesced in, were on one side. Yet the Greeks appear to have been thoroughly capable and efficient in the business of burning villages and putting the inhabitants to the sword; and since they were primarily the invaders, there is doubtless something to be said for the Turkish side. In the premises, Mr. Hughes's polite but non-committal responses were appropriate, for the great majority of his fellow-citizens have no disposition to go 4000 miles to fight a Kemal, even at the urgent behest of emotional clergymen who act more like priests of Mars than servants of the Prince of Peace.

It is a wonderful thing to see the suddenness with which vital topics are sometimes dropped by the newspapers. In our perusal of the New York dailies, it is a good long time now since we have noticed any editorial references to the Bolsheviks as red-handed demons, assassins and murderers. By the way, too, what has become of them there now debts that the French were trying to recover from the Soviet Government? We have not heard anything about those for quite a while. On the contrary, the Associated Press informs us that a referendum is to be taken among 160 French Chambers of Commerce on the advisability of resuming trade with Russia, and that Brother Herriot, Mayor of Lyons, thinks that a French commercial delegation ought to be sent to Moscow! Again, with surprise and distress we observe a report that M. Poincaré is turning to Russia again as an ally of France! The old story—shaking hands with murder. The fact is, of course, that the would-be concessionaires of France and England are sweating blood to get their hands on Russia's resources; and the Soviet Government is well aware of it and is acting accordingly. What the Soviet Government is saying about England and France is not published in this country. We think we may print a few lines of it next week, maybe, just by way of side light on these little inconsistencies that we have been mentioning.

We came in for something of a surprise the other day, when we met up with a summary of the statistics on military expenditures which have been furnished to the League of Nations by the member-Governments. According to official estimates, the French Government will lay out this year, on army, navy and air-service, an amount 7.9 per cent smaller than that expended in 1913, the last pre-war year. Great Britain shows, on the other hand, an increase of 19.2 per cent for the same period, while India follows along with 14.2 per cent, Australia with 17.4, Canada with 7.6, and New Zealand with a magnificent increase of 148.3 per cent. The only member of the British fraternity to show a reduction in its military budget is South Africa, with a cut of 25.4 per cent. If there is a coloured gentleman hidden somewhere in this statistical wood pile, we should be very much pleased to have some of our British contemporaries point him out to us. For the present, we shall salt down even more liberally than has been our custom heretofore, everything that the British press may have to say about the militarism of France.

It was not so long ago that privilege looked amiably on the American Legion as a handy sort of organization that could be relied on to support 100 per cent suppression of political and economic heresies. Its occasional forays into direct action were regarded with complacency, because they were always on the right side. It was true that the proposed bonus was a bit thick, but the Chambers of Commerce and the Rotarians managed to gather in enough senators to avert that raid on the Treasury, meanwhile protesting their undying affection for "the boys." At the recent convention of the American Legion it became clear that "the boys" no longer reciprocate this platonic affection of the best people and right thinkers. They uproariously cheered Mr. Samuel Gompers, and effected a paper alliance with the American Federation of Labour to advance their mutual and several interests. In other words, they served notice on the timorous "interests" that they had better quit their sabotage on the bonus or "the boys" would line up with the unions in a new and terrifying bloc. Perhaps this threat will serve. It will be recalled that in pressing the bonus-measure Senator McCumber remarked fearfully that if the Government did not give the veterans a substantial dole, they could scarcely be depended on to protect us from the Reds.

WE read last week of a man who learned enough Esperanto in seven hours to carry on a slow conversation. There are a good many misapprehensions and prejudices about Esperanto. Nobody but a fanatic would think of using it as a literary language or in any sense to supplant his own; any such proposal would be preposterous. As a *lingua franca*, however, as a mere instrument to facilitate the exchange of thought with persons of another tongue, Esperanto seems to us an extremely useful and valuable thing, and as such it ought to be encouraged. In our view, it stands precisely on the plane of the Arabic numerals, the metric system of weights and measures, the decimal system of coinage, or any other purely conventional arrangement devised for convenience in international intercourse. It is no trouble to learn Esperanto, and once learned, it sticks. If school-children were required to give it but a fraction of the time that they now fool away over mere sciolism in botany, chemistry, geology and what not, they would have a handsome asset. This could never be done, however, as long as our public schools are under political control—the instinctive jealousy of nationalism would stand in the way, as it does in France, where, as we read lately, the Minister of Education has used his authority to forbid the study of this useful language.

For the black South, the Northern States have been for generations a kind of Promised Land, but the indications are that the promise is not being very generously fulfilled. Every year, Negroes in increasing numbers are putting their expectations of the North to the test of experience. During the years 1910-1920 there was a considerable

exodus from the South, and according to a statement just issued at Washington, the growth in the Negro population, during this decade, in the territory bounded by and including Michigan on the West, Massachusetts on the East, and West Virginia on the South, accounted for fifty-six per cent of the increase for the United States as a whole. It appears, however, that the white people of the North have not made their civilization altogether accessible and attractive to the Negroes, for it is in the Northern States, and especially in New York City, that race-consciousness, race-pride and the desire for a separate and distinct development is making itself most clearly manifest among the blacks. If the shades of the abolitionists of other days could descend, some Saturday night, into the streets and public halls of Harlem, they would be shocked to find certain Negroes preaching cultural separatism, and even calling for a grand exodus to Africa. Little as some of the Northern friends of the Negro may like to face the fact, it is true that many of the Negroes who have gotten as far as the Northern States still feel that they are "way down in Egypt's land."

If the armistice had not brought the war to such an untimely end, there might be nothing now but cosmic raw materials on the site of Berlin. After four years of discreet silence, it has just been announced that the American Air Service was preparing, in the autumn of 1918, to pulverize the German capital. The job was to have been done by huge flying torpedoes, each with a small airplane attached. The pilots were to fly these contrivances to the neighbourhood of the city, and then, having set the self-propelling torpedoes on their proper course, they were to cut away in the air, and return to their own lines in the small planes. According to the inventors, a thousand of these flying torpedoes can be built and operated at the cost of one battleship. It seems, then, that the invention has everything to recommend it; and indeed we have not heard of any other which promises so much for the future in the way of general, expeditious, and inexpensive destruction.

A NEW YORK judge has ruled that after two years of banishment Mr. James Branch Cabell's "Jurgen" may now be read by Americans, and a New York jury is now in process of making up its mind whether after some 2000 years of circulation the writings of Petronius are unfit for human consumption. These incidents are reminders of the rapid pace at which the Volsteadization of our literature and art is proceeding. Apparently the time is at hand when it will be as heinous a crime to read Rabelais or Chaucer as it is to drink a bottle of burgundy. Our moving pictures have already been censored so effectively that it is virtually impossible for anyone with a mind more mature than that of a twelve-year-old child to sit through a five-reel film. Any American dramatist who projects an original idea is faced with the spectre of the police court. Artists who dare anything beyond the safe and sane modes of fifty years ago must starve unwept, unhonoured and unsung. No hundred per cent may touch a new book until the courts have accorded it their benediction, and any citizen who ventures a political or economic opinion that fails to win the approval of His Majesty the Attorney-General is likely to spend the rest of his life in prison as a criminal syndicalist. In short the Blue Terror is raging amongst us, and the only thing that we can do is to keep patience with it until it dies of its own excess of absurdity.

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## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

### A TIME TO THINK.

HOPES of a new political party springs eternal in certain breasts, and talk of it has considerably revived of late. Indications point to a lapse of interest in politics; the registration of voters in New York State, for example, was notably light. This loss of interest is interpreted generally, and we think correctly as far as it goes, as indicating disgust with the two major parties; and there seems to be an impression that the formation of a new party might fire again the flagging zest of the electorate. Mr. Munsey and Mr. Nicholas Murray Butler think that the country is dividing actually upon the issue of radicalism against conservatism; and they are in favour of having this issue carried straight over into some kind of political formulation. Such a thing is hard to imagine; one wonders with amusement what a radical party and a conservative party in the United States would be like, and what their principles would be. Mr. Charles Nagel, who was Secretary of Commerce and Labour in Mr. Taft's Cabinet, has just published an admirable statement wherein he calls upon the Republican organization to rebuild itself upon the foundation of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, free speech, free press and the general guarantees of liberty and property. His analysis of existing political conditions is accurate and thorough; his arraignment of existing party-organizations is very powerful and wholly just. To a student of government, however, his conclusion appears quite feeble; yet one is aware that he is driven to it by the logic of his own analysis. He sees clearly, in contrast to the odd fancies of Mr. Munsey and Mr. Butler, that "there is no immediate prospect of a new party, mainly because no new issue so far commands national support." If this be the case, there is nothing for a politically-minded person to do, obviously, but exhort one of the two old-line parties to experience a change of heart, reform itself and become the party of the future. Naturally, therefore, since Mr. Nagel is a Republican, he addresses his exhortation to the Republicans.

Mr. Nagel does not quite hit the mark, we think, because he does not see that the restlessness and discontent which he discerns is largely due to a distrust of *all* political organization and all parliamentary institutions. This distrust is growing at a great rate even here; and in Europe, of course, much faster. Obviously, then, if by some miracle the Republican party were regenerate and born anew as Mr. Nagel desires, this distrust would not be appreciably allayed. Nor would it be appreciably allayed if a new party should be manufactured out of whole cloth. The trouble is that so many people have come to see that *all* political organization is essentially inimical to the general good, that it exists primarily for the precise purpose that the Republicans and Democrats are now fulfilling. That purpose is to maintain the present economic system—the system whereby an owning and exploiting class can appropriate without compensation the earnings of a propertyless dependent class; and any party in power will maintain and promote that system just as far as the state of popular knowledge and opinion will make it safe to do so. Mr. Nagel will discover upon investigation that all political parties have done just this, and that in the nature of their organization, they are bound to do so; and that the popular distrust of parties is based upon a growing apprehension of this fact. In short, an *idea* is being disengaged and liberated upon

the world; an idea as great and powerful as that which was disengaged and liberated at the time of the French Revolution. No one knows, no one can possibly know, what the practical expression of this idea will be. The time is not ripe for contemplating or even for thinking about its practical expression. There is, as the Preacher said, a time for everything; there is a time for action and organization. But that time is not now. The present is a time for revealment and appraisement, for disinterestedly promoting the progress of the idea. All thought and energy that sincere spirits like Mr. Nagel now put upon action and organization is worse than wasted, it is retarding. Mr. Nagel is aware that a party can not be built out of resentments, sentimentalism and compromises between conflicting interests. The "new issue" of which he speaks must be the formulation of an idea; and it is therefore with the idea alone that good and wise men must at this time concern themselves. Mr. Nagel's suggestion that the Republicans reform, is naive. Now is not "the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party"; it is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the idea.

We earnestly entreat Mr. Nagel and all who are like-minded with him—and they are many—to let the parties go, to give up all thought of action and organization, and devote themselves to helping in the disengagement and liberation of the idea. Surely it is not for nothing that politicians have a greater horror of the idea than of anything else in the world. They can meet organization, or corrupt and capture it—it does not take a long memory to recall the Progressives and Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Perkins. They can manage unintelligent discontent or unintelligent violence; but they are powerless before the idea. See what wonderful pains they take, in their control of the press, schools, pulpit and forum, to see to it that the idea has as little chance as possible! It is the liberation of the idea which they dread, just as they dreaded it when the homeliest man in Athens stood before them on trial for his life, or when a Roman procurator decided that a greater exponent of the idea was too dangerous to be let live any longer.

May we respectfully urge upon Mr. Nagel that this is not the time—far from it—for party-builders or for reformers? It is not the time for another Washington or Lincoln. It is the time for another Cobden, a Cobden in every village in the land, to stand before the people and by the aid of history and economics, continually interpret to them their own experience; to speak to them in fundamental terms of their own economic life, and to show them the true relation of that life to all departments of public affairs.

### THE GODS AND M. POINCARÉ.

SIGNS multiply that the Near Eastern imbroglio may result in a new realignment of the political planets in the European solar system. M. Herriot, unofficial envoy to Russia from the French Government, is back from Moscow reporting that Messrs. Chicherin and Trotzky are most amiable, and M. Poincaré and his colleagues are coquettishly waving white handkerchiefs in the direction of the Volga while the semi-official *Temps* is speaking with friendly respect of those erstwhile renegades, brigands and murderers who happen to compose the Government of Russia.

Apparently M. Herriot whispered to some purpose in the Russian capital. Doubtless the speed of France's gravitation towards Russia was also somewhat accelerated by Mr. Lloyd George's recent speech in which, in the course of trying to save his face, he soundly

slapped the faces of both the French Cabinet and the Turkish leaders. If it had not been for himself, declared Mr. Lloyd George, and for his prompt action at the Dardanelles, the murderous Turks would have swept into the Balkans and all European civilization would have gone to smash in another catastrophe of war. He and he alone was the authentic dove of peace. The French Government and the Kemalists lost no time in coming back at him. M. Franklin-Bouillon insisted that with the aid of the Turks, whom he had found eminently reasonable, his own conciliatory diplomacy had saved the situation which Mr. Lloyd George's rash militarism had rendered highly dangerous; and in effect the Kemalists confirmed this contention. Ferid Bey, Kemal's minister at Paris, expressed emphatic objection to some of Mr. Lloyd George's vital statistics, according to which Kemal's soldiers had cut the throats of half a million more Armenians than there are in the whole Turkish Empire. Moreover, M. Franklin-Bouillon pointed out that Mr. Lloyd George's representatives at Constantinople, apparently with deliberation, gave out a false *communiqué* about a delicate phase of the Mudania conference, which might have resulted in an open break. To this serious charge there has been no reply. The honours of the "who-stopped-the-war?" controversy certainly do not lie with Mr. Lloyd George, and the principal effect of his utterances has been to affront French feeling.

The gods have been kind to M. Poincaré of late; in the developments in the Near East they have given him something to bargain with in his dealings with the Soviet Government. The essential trouble between Soviet Russia and France has been that France had nothing tangible to offer in return for some sort of advantageous compromise on the Russian bonds held in France. As long as that situation endured, all was bitterness. Now the fates have placed the Dardanelles in the hand of M. Poincaré and he is dangling these enticingly before Lenin and his colleagues, asking, "How much am I offered?" The Straits are a trinket of substantial value and hence the amiability of Moscow. Assuredly it is worth while for any Russian Government to pay a few hundred million gold roubles to the French bankers if it can get therefor some solid assurance that the Straits will no longer be bottled up by the British Government, which at any time can shut off the flow of grain and oil from Russia's warm-water ports and can use this strategic advantage for purposes of that diplomatic blackmail which has become so familiar to all of us.

In times past the British Government was wont to use Turkey as a barricade between Russia and warm water. Before the war, for higher diplomatic purposes, she was compelled to reach an understanding with Russia and let Turkey slip under German influence. The great military triumph of the Allies gave Britain the ambitious idea of holding the Straits on her own, letting both Russia and Turkey go hang, but unfortunate events have crippled if not entirely smashed this policy. Kemalist Turkey is an enemy and Russia is swinging away, while Britain's former ally, France, is zealously taking advantage of the situation for its own purposes. The current political disintegration in England does not help the situation from the British point of view.

The new British Government will have to act quickly to recapture the favour of either France or the Soviets. If Britain is to hold the Straits, if she is to stave off a resumption of the historic Franco-Russian entente,

some slick diplomatic arrangements will have to be effected. We have faith that the new Government can command the services of enough canny and unscrupulous past masters in the art of diplomatic chicanery to make the best of a bad situation, but at present M. Poincaré holds most of the high cards.

### THE LESSER ALTITUDES.

WITHOUT trespassing on the lofty preserve of the mountaineer, or aspiring to membership in the Alpine Club, the more commonplace mortal may still have his upland experiences, and may be excused for finding in quite moderate altitudes a touch of the romance that attaches even to a slight elevation above the level of everyday existence.

One is not obliged to go on a voyage of discovery to the North Pole to see the midnight sun, or to climb Mt. Everest or the Matterhorn in order to feel the thrill of icy solitudes. In winter a short pull over the snow of one of the modest Jura mountains, through groves of frosty Christmas trees, will take one to a point of vantage from which one can look across the sea of clouds that overhangs Lake Geneva at that season to the splendid panorama of the Alps, mountains of clear ice, glowing perchance with all the rosy colours of sunset.

Although they scarcely rise above the three-thousand-and-foot-level, it is doubtful whether there is anywhere a greater reward for the effort involved in climbing than that offered by the mountains of England. The brooding hills of Scotland may be higher, and distinguished by more romantic associations; they present a more gorgeous appearance when the heather is in bloom, and surpass their southern neighbours in abundance and variety of wild life. The insistent note of the peewit, the lonely cry of the high-flying plover, and the bleating of sheep and lambs are characteristic sounds which hint, perhaps, at the origin of the bagpipe. The mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland are not so thickly peopled, but they are massed together in a glorious confusion of outline, "like the waves of a tumultuous sea" which has been caught in some mysterious enchantment. Over ten feet of annual rainfall ensures a luxuriant growth of grass and fern on these treeless mountains, and pockets of peaty soil hold the water like a sponge, from which it descends in a thousand tinkling rivulets.

It costs but a struggle up steep paths to escape from the relaxing atmosphere of the valley into a region of lonely crags and broken ground where sheep, half hidden in the bracken, nibble the moist grass. But once there, the enchanting views change at every step as peaks and ridges, still mountain-tarns, green sun-lit meadows and placid lakes far down in the valley are seen at varying angles. Clouds move across the mountain-sides, which seem to change in composition as their different features are thrown into relief by a shaft of light or veiled by a passing shadow.

Looking west from Wansfell in the late afternoon, the irregular outline of Crinkle Crags and Bowfell appears bathed in a misty and golden glory of light under lifting clouds, while the Langdale Pikes, a blue shoulder of Scawfell beyond, and a succession of high ridges, are dimly bright with smothered sunlight. Or from the flank of Fairfield, on a day of sun and showers, one may watch the rain-clouds sweep by, and through the rain behold green fields far below, bright in the sunshine, while on the high fells a shaft of light shines on the drenched and glistening bracken as it moves; and all the while little frothy beck,

promptu streamlets responsive to the showers, unite their many voices in a sound delightful to the listening ear.

But one must love the rain to get the full flavour of this wild northern country. The west wind comes moisture-laden from the sea, and when it strikes the barrier of mountains condenses into clouds which scatter their burden as they move inland. When a persistent rain has turned the gentle Rotha into a noisy mountain-torrent, and Sour Milk Gill has become a full-grown cataract, there will be no trippers at Easedale Tarn, where one will seem to be alone in the centre of all downpours as the water spills over the rim of the surrounding crags in racing lines of foam. At such a time the sounds of wind and water appear to be in full possession of the universe. If one's discomfort of wet clothes be voluntary, and not too prolonged, there is no more exhilarating sensation than to tramp the gusty heights where slender waterfalls are sometimes blown into the air like smoke by the rushing wind. The bright fires and simple comfort of the inn await one when one returns; and lying in bed at night one can hear no pleasanter sound than that of the rain drumming on the grateful sod.

Then one day the rain stops, and the white mist rising from the valley, backed by darker clouds, gives the impression of some great conflagration—a burning city or a forest-fire. The sound of streams fills the air, and the mountain-sides glisten in the sun. Upon the fields the wet hay lies half-harvested, and the cattle are grouped in the green meadows, above which rise the darker greens of the aspiring bracken, crowned by yellow wire grass bright against the crags, while from the cottage-chimneys, half hidden in the trees, the smoke rises slowly into the still air.

At night the edges of the clouds are lighted by the moon, which gleams through them on the placid lake and casts a soft radiance upon the beds of phlox and bright marigolds in the village gardens, while the clock in St. Oswald's gently strikes the hours in minor thirds.

. . . the clouds

The mists, the shadows, light of golden suns,  
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,  
And have an answer—thither come, and shape  
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts  
And idle spirits.

Not unlike the English Lake District is the island of Mt. Desert, with its combination of mountains, lakes and sea; but the differences are as striking as the similarity. The New England country, for all its dark firs and drifting fogs, is tamer and more accessible. The outlines of the mountains are more regular, suggesting a procession of elephants rather than a stampede of wild horses. The magic lens of a super-saturated atmosphere is missing, and there are days of unbroken sunshine which seem to excuse the slighting reference of Henry James to "the raw, bleeding skies of America."

Among the advantages of this new national park is its nearness to the sea, upon the crinkled surface of which one may look down from an elevation of a thousand feet or more, while fiord and bay and island-dotted coast offer visions of bewildering beauty. The mountain-trails lead through the shade of spruce and birch woods, over springy carpets of deep moss, to granite ridges where the blueberry bushes offer a delectable addition to the climber's luncheon. These pleasant ways are open to the multitude, as the well-trodden trails testify. In October, when the multitude has departed, the hill-sides glow with an impressive display of autumn colours.

The mountaineer, equipped with hobnailed boots, with rope and alpenstock, may seek the regions of perpetual snow. No doubt he has his reward. But so also in due measure has he who fain must be content with the lesser altitudes.

#### CONCERNING BASHAN'S MANNER OF LIFE.

A MAN in the valley of the Isar had told me that dogs of this species might become obnoxious, for they were always anxious to be with the master. I was therefore warned against accepting the tenacious faithfulness which Bashan soon began to display towards me as all too personal in its origin. On the other hand, this made it easier for me to discourage it a little—in so far as this may in self-defence have been necessary. We have to deal here with a remote and long-derived patriarchal instinct of the dog which leads him—at least so far as the more manly, open-air, loving breeds are concerned—to regard and honour the man, the head of the house and the family, as the master, the protector of the house, the lord; and to find the goal and meaning of his existence in a peculiar relationship of loyal vassal-friendship and in the maintenance of a far greater spirit of independence towards the other members of the family. It was this spirit that Bashan manifested towards me from the very beginning. His eyes followed me about with a manly trustfulness shining in them. He seemed to be asking for commands which he might fulfill but which I chose not to give, since obedience was not one of his strong points. He clung to my heels with the visible conviction that his inseparability from me was something firmly rooted in the sacred nature of things.

It went without saying that in the family-circle he would lie down only at my feet and never at anyone else's. It went equally without saying that in case I should separate from the others when out walking and pursue my own ways, he should join me and follow my footsteps. He also insisted upon my company when I was working, and when he chanced to find the door that gave upon the garden closed, he would come vaulting in through the window with startling suddenness, whereby a good deal of gravel would come rattling in upon the floor, and then, with a sob and a sigh, he would throw himself under my desk.

But there is a reverence which we pay to life and to living things which is too vigilant and keen not to be violated even by a dog's presence when we feel the need of being alone, and it was then that Bashan always disturbed me in the most tangible fashion. He would step up to my chair, wag his tail, look at me with devouring glances and keep up an incessant trampling.

Called sharply to account, he would lie down once more and fall asleep. But no sooner was he asleep than he would begin to dream, and then he would go through all the movements of running with all his four feet stretched out, at the same time giving vent to a clear yet subdued ventriloquistic barking which sounded as if it came from another world. That this had a disturbing and distracting effect upon me need surprise no one, for first of all it was eerie, and then it stirred and burdened my conscience. This dream-life was all too clearly an artificial substitute for the real chase, the real hunt, and was provided for him by his nature, because in his life with me, the happiness of unrestrained movement in the open did not devolve upon him in that measure which his blood and his instincts demanded. This came home to me very strongly, but as it was not to be altered, it was necessary that my moral disquietude should be dispelled by an appeal to other and higher interests. This led me to affirm that he brought a great deal of mud into the room during bad weather and, moreover, that he tore the carpets with his claws. Hence, as a matter of principle, he was forbidden to remain in the house or to bear me company as long as I chanced to be in the house—even though occasional exceptions were made. He understood this law at once and submitted to the unnatural prohibition, since it was precisely this which expressed the inscrutable will of the master and lord of the house.

As for any independent life which Bashan might lead without me during these hours—that is not to be thought of. Through the glass door of my study I see him disporting in a clumsy, uncle-like manner with the children on the small patch of grass in front of the house. But repeatedly he comes running up to the door, and, as he can not see me through the muslin curtain which stretches across the pane, he sniffs at the crack between door and jamb so as to assure himself of my presence, and then sits down on the steps with his back turned towards the room, mounting guard. From my writing-table I can also see him moving at a

thoughtful trot between the old aspens on the elevated highway yonder. But such promenades are merely a tepid pastime devoid of pride, joy and life.

He begins to live only when I go forth—though alas, he can not always be said to begin life even then! For after I leave the house the question is whether I am going to turn towards the right, that is, down the avenue that leads into the open and to the solitude of our hunting-grounds, or towards the left in the direction of the tram-station in order to ride to the city and the great and spacious world. It is only in the first instance that Bashan finds that there is any sense in accompanying me. He jumps up from the door-mat upon which he has been awaiting my coming forth under the protecting arch of the entrance. He jumps up and at the same moment he sees what my intentions are. My clothing betrays these to him, the cane that I carry, also my attitude and expression, the cool and preoccupied look I give him, or the irritation and challenge in my eyes. He understands. Headlong he plunges down the steps and goes dancing before me in swift and sudden bounds and full of excitement towards the gate, when my going forth seems to be certain. But when he beholds hope vanish, then he subsides within himself, lays his ears close to his head, and his eyes take on that expression of shy misery which is found in contrite sinners—that look which misfortune begets in the eyes of men and also of animals.

At times he is really unable to believe what he sees and knows, that it is all up and that there is no use in hoping for a hunt. His desires have been too intense. He repudiates the signs and symbols—chooses not to see the city walking-stick I carry, the careful, citified clothes I am wearing. He pushes through the gate with me, switches around outside in a half turn and seeks to draw me towards the right by starting to gallop in this direction and by turning his head toward me, forces himself to overlook the fateful No which I oppose to his efforts. He comes back when I actually do turn towards the left, accompanies me, snorting deeply, and ejaculating short, confused, high notes, which seem to arise from the tremendous tension within him, as I walk along the fence of the garden, and then he begins to jump back and forth over the pickets of the adjacent public park. These pickets are rather high and he groans a little in his flight through the air out of fear lest he hurt himself. He makes these leaps impelled by a kind of desperate gaiety, scornful of all hard facts, and also to bribe me, to work upon my sympathies by his cleverness. For it is not yet quite impossible—however improbable it may seem—that I may nevertheless leave the city path at the end of the park, once more turn towards the left and lead him into liberty—even if only by the slightly roundabout way of the post-box. This happens, it is true, but happens only rarely. Once this hope has dissolved into empty air, Bashan settles down upon his haunches and lets me go my way.

There he sits now, in yokel-like, ungraceful attitude, in the very middle of the road, and stares after my retreating form down the whole long vista. If I turn my head, he pricks up his ears, but does not follow me. Nor would he follow me if I should call or whistle—he knows this would all be to no purpose. Even from the very end of the avenue I can see him still sitting there, a small, dark, awkward shape in the middle of the high road. A pang goes through my heart—I mount the tram with an uneasy conscience. He has waited so long and so patiently—and who does not know what torture waiting can be! His whole life is nothing but waiting—for the next walk in the open—and this waiting begins as soon as he has rested after his last run. During the night, too, he waits, for his slumbers are distributed throughout the entire twenty-four hours of the sun's revolution; and many a siesta upon the smooth lawn, whilst the sun beats upon his coat, or behind the curtains of his hut, must help to shorten the bare and empty spaces of the day. His nocturnal rest is therefore disturbed and without unity. He is driven by blind impulses hither and thither in the darkness, through the yard and the garden—he runs from place to place—and waits. He waits for the recurrent visit of the local watchman with the lantern, the heavy thud of whose footfall he accompanies against his own better knowledge with a terrible burst of heralding barks. He waits for the paling of the heavens, the crowing of the cock in the near-by nursery, the stir of the morning wind in the trees, and for the unlocking of the kitchen-entrance, so that he may slip in and warm himself at the white-tiled range.

But I believe that the torture of his nightly vigil is mild, compared to that which Bashan must endure in the broad of day, particularly when the weather is fair, be it winter or summer, when the sun lures into the open, and the desire for violent motion tugs in every muscle, and his master, without

whom, of course, there can be no real enjoyment, persistently refuses to leave his seat behind the glass door.

Bashan's mobile little body, through which life pulsates so swiftly and feverishly, has been, so to speak, exhausted with rest—and there can be no thought of sleep. Up he comes to the terrace in front of my door, drops himself in the gravel with a sob which comes from the very depths of his being, and lays his head upon his paws, turning up his eyes with a martyr's expression towards heaven. This, however, lasts only a few seconds; the new position irks him at once, he feels it to be untenable. There is still one thing he can do. He may descend the steps and devote some attention to a small tree trimmed in the shape of a rose tree and flanking the beds of roses, an unfortunate tree which, owing to these visits of Bashan, dwindles away every year and must be replanted. There he stands on three legs, melancholy and contemplative—the slave of a habit, whether urged by Nature or not. Then he reverts to his four legs and is no better off than before. Dumbly he gazes aloft into the branches of a group of ash trees. Two birds are flitting from bough to bough with lively twitterings—he watches the feathered ones dashing away swift as arrows, and turns aside, seeming to shrug his shoulders at so much childish élan of life.

He stretches and strains as though he intended to tear himself asunder. This undertaking, for the sake of thoroughness, he divides into two parts; first of all, he stretches his front legs, lifting his hindquarters into the air, and then exercises these by stretching his hind legs far behind him. He yawns tremendously both times, with wide, red, gaping jaws and upcurled tongue. Well, now he has also achieved this—the performance can not be carried on any further, and having once stretched yourself according to all the rules of the game, it is inconceivable that you should immediately repeat the manoeuvre. So Bashan stands and gazes at the ground. Then he begins to turn himself slowly and searchingly about his own axis as though he wished to lie down and were not as yet certain of the manner in which this should be done. He changes his mind, however, and goes with lazy step to the middle of the lawn, where with a sudden, almost convulsive movement, he hurls himself upon his back in order to cool and scour it by a lively rolling hither and thither upon the mowed surface of the grass.

This must induce a mighty feeling of bliss, for stiffly he draws up his paws as he rolls, and snaps into the air in all directions in a tumult of joy and satisfaction. All the more passionately does he drain this rapture to the very dregs because he knows that it is purely a fleeting rapture. For a moment he lies upon his side with twisted eyeballs, as though he were dead. Then he rises and shakes himself. He shakes himself as only his kind is able to shake itself—without having to fear a concussion of the brain. He shakes himself to a crescendo of flappings and rattlings, and his ears go slapping under his jawbone and his loose lips part from his white, bare, triangular teeth.

And then? Then he stands motionless, in stark abstraction. He has reached the ultimate limit and no longer has a single idea about what he shall do with himself. Under such circumstances as these, he has recourse to something extreme. He climbs up to the terrace, approaches the glass door—scratches only once and very feebly. But this soft and timidly lifted paw, his soft, solitary scratching, upon which he had resolved after all other counsel had failed, work mightily upon me, and I arise to open the door for him in order to let him in, although I know that this can lead to no good. For he immediately begins to leap and cavort, as a call to engage in many enterprises. He pushes the carpet into a hundred folds, spreads confusion through the rooms, and my peace and quiet are at an end.

But now judge whether it is easy for me to sail off in the tram, after seeing Bashan wait thus, and leave him sitting, a melancholy little heap of misery, deep within the converging lines of the avenue of poplars.

THOMAS MANN.

(Translated by Herman George Scheffauer.)

### THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE.

The Moscow Art Theatre which, rumour affirms, will visit America sometime this year, was founded during the winter season of 1897-98. Moscow had begun to manifest an interest in the work of "The Society of Art and Literature," whose dominant spirit was Constantin Stanislavsky, actor and producer. A certain flurry of interest was also created by the report that the pupils of Vladimir Nemiro-

vitch-Dantchenko, a well-known playwright and lecturer on dramatic art at the Moscow Philharmonic Society, were to make their first appearance that same winter. One day these men determined to unite their efforts and organize a theatre of their own which would be devoted to the expression of new ideas and ideals through the interpretations of young artists. The goal they set themselves was to elevate the æsthetic standards of the theatre without forgoing the advantages accruing from the appeal made to the masses.

With the help of a number of intellectual business men, headed by a well-known merchant, S. T. Morosov, a certain amount of capital was subscribed, a library organized, paintings and objects of art collected. A company of actors and actresses was selected from among the pupils of Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, suitable plays were chosen, and rehearsals begun. All members of the company were obliged to be present at these rehearsals, even those who were not taking part in the play. The rehearsals differed in many respects from those at other theatres. They comprised, for example, dissertations upon the theme and spirit of the plays to be presented, and these lectures often turned into lively debates. Every effort was made to direct the discussions along the lines of creative criticism.

Vladimir Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, recalling these infant struggles, has said: "How happy we were at that time! The unknown future had no terrors for us, for we were all united by fast ties of real friendship; and this friendship resulted from the fact that we were all in love with one idea—the idea of the new theatre. We spent nights and days in a small building in the suburbs of Moscow, slaving, dreaming, building up the dream. We were obsessed by the idea—by something which was still unclear, indefinite, but beautiful. It robbed us of sleep and quiet, but infused us with an ecstatic force, a creative fire. The form which the new theatre was to take was not yet quite clear to us—we merely knew that we were rebels against everything pompous, unnatural, theatrical, against the onerous old traditions. This collective protest, this love of the idea, the mystery and the adventure of it, united us all and gave us force and faith. . . ."

Soon the vague idea began to crystallize and assume form, colour, direction, and then it precipitated itself into a formula, a theory, thus: Life that was to be represented upon the stage must approach reality along the path of artistic truth; the deep, inner meaning of simple, everyday facts must be revealed in equally simple but æsthetic media—*the human spirit must enact itself*. This theory has for the most part remained dominant in the Moscow Art Theatre during its entire existence. Three chief movements may be distinguished. The first confined itself to straightforward realism, and remained close to the naturalism of those who followed the tradition of the Meiningen stage. The second adopted the symbolic as expressed in the production of Maeterlinck's one-act plays, "The Drama of Life" by Knut Hamsun, and the like. The third movement is that which has dominated the Theatre up to the present—"the theatre of inner life," that is the theatre in which all attention is concentrated upon revealing on the stage the profoundest psychological truths—the absolute interpenetration of the actor and the rôle.

The Moscow Art Theatre first opened its doors on 14 October, 1898, with a tragedy in verse by

Count Alexis Tolstoy, entitled "Tsar Fedor Ivanovich." But the real success of the venture dates from the production of "Tschaika" or "The Sea-Gull" by Chekhov, a play which had been pronounced a failure a year before at the Alexandrina Theatre in St. Petersburg. The Art Theatre made it a custom to produce not more than two or three plays in a season, a custom conditioned by its system of production. The rehearsals took place around a table and not upon the stage. It was only after the actors had mastered the psychology of their parts that the rehearsals were transferred to the stage. The producer refrained from confusing the actor at the beginning by imposing upon him any particular attention to the *mise en scène*, or details of stage-business. It is obvious that with a system such as this, the production of a play might often take a whole year. Nevertheless, during the twenty-four years of its existence, the Moscow Art Theatre has produced over sixty plays by Russian and foreign authors, among the latter being plays by Shakespeare, Byron, Molière, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann and Hamsun. All plays were chosen by a committee of which Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko were permanent members.

Constantin Stanislavsky was the soul and Vladimir Nemirovitch-Dantchenko the brains of the Theatre. E. Krasnopska, a member of the Art Theatre, has given us a pen portrait of Stanislavsky: "Spiritually one was drowned in him. I first met him at a lesson in the rehearsal theatre. Some one opened the door and said: 'Constantin Sergeievitch is coming.' When he entered it was as though a flood of light invaded the room, streaming from his tall figure, his snow-white hair, his child-like yet piercing eyes. Everything took on a festal air. Those two hours went like so many minutes." Krasnopska gives us likewise a portrait in dim outlines of Nemirovitch-Dantchenko:

It was in a small room in the Art Theatre—the study of Vladimir Ivanovitch. A small lamp illuminates half the room. And there, in the shadow, he sits in an arm-chair and speaks. . . . Rain and darkness are outside the window. The soul is silent, every nerve is strained, striving to understand. Like bell-strokes fall his words. . . . He speaks of the soul of the actor:

'When Gérard de Nerval was lying ill in a hospital, he saw by the power of his inner vision one of the most brilliant and tender scenes in his "Saardam." He was actually transported thither, the imagined place became more actual than the real. The same thing must happen to the actor. He must be able to say: I was spiritually in the soul and body of Hamlet, or Don Juan or Mitia Karamazov. It is then, if only for two or three seconds, that the actor really becomes the person he represents, and the emotions of this person transfuse, transform him. The magic flame may flare up for only three seconds, but its light remains long in the actor's soul and in the soul of the spectator. Often these three seconds transforms the stage into a feast of feasts because a miracle of perfect reincarnation takes place before thousands of eyes.'

Among the actors of the Moscow Art Theatre is Katchelov, the greatest artist on the Russian stage. As a young man, having just completed his studies at the university, Katchelov joined a repertory-company in the provinces and remained with it for three years. In 1900 he had already become the leading actor in Kazan and Sarotov, two large commercial towns on the Volga. One day he received a telegram from Moscow asking him to join the Art Theatre there. His old confrères advised him against accepting the offer which would bring him only one-third the salary he was then receiving; his young fellow-actors advised him to go. He finally yielded to the advice of a friend who told him:

"The Moscow Art Theatre is worthless—but Moscow is Moscow."

When Katchelov reached Moscow he was asked to give a specimen of his acting from a play of his own choosing. He had, however, seen enough of the methods at the Art Theatre to depress him and to cause him to lose faith in his own powers. He was voted a failure and Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko were full of regrets for having called him away from Kazan. He was not ripe for a place in the Art Theatre. Nevertheless he stayed on and studied the system of the two masters. One day, the company was rehearsing "Snegourotchka," a play by Ostrovsky, and Stanislavsky remarked to Katchelov: "As you see, we can not find anyone who can do the part of Tsar Berendei properly. Will you try it?" Katchelov agreed and studied the part for three days and three nights. His success, crowned by a kiss from Stanislavsky, was overwhelming, and from that day his ascent to the premier rank among the actors of Russia followed a steady and unflagging upward curve.

The Moscow Art Theatre has continued to fulfill its mission during all the troubled years which have descended upon Russia, and the influence it exerts is as profound as ever. All members of the company cherish a tender affection for the organization. It is not merely a company of actors, but a family, a close-knit, loving family which finds joy and rich compensation in working together and which, owing to the force of its collective efforts, achieves the highest and noblest art.

LEONID CHATSKY.

### JONATHAN SWIFT.

It is very certain that there never has lived a man who would have made a better subject for a psycho-analyst than Jonathan Swift, the ferocious, splenetic, and impotent Dean, of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Proud with an inordinate pride, cynically frank and yet pestered by strange and unaccountable inhibitions, the "mad parson" lived out his long life, dependent upon human beings and yet disdainful of them, attracted by the crazy drama of existence and yet at the same time out of conceit with it. Small wonder that the anomalies and contradictions of such a character should have captivated the minds of succeeding generations for nearly two hundred years! Was this man, the savagery of whose glance was actually potent enough to kill, the mere victim of some morbid physical derangement; or did the madness that fell upon him at last owe its origin to a deeper and more terrible cause? Is it really possible that one glimpse into the ghastly secret designs of life is sufficient to shatter, in certain abnormally sensitive temperaments, those delicately adjusted cerebral nerves which distinguish mortal men from the beasts of the field? When we remember the fate of Pascal, of Nietzsche, of Guy de Maupassant, each one of them gifted with just this dangerous, penetrating insight, our hearts quail lest this indeed be so.

With that irony which was characteristic of him Swift himself affected to attribute his malady to a simple enough cause, to nothing else, in fact, than a youthful surfeit of golden pippins.

"Dropped in Ireland by a perfect accident" he was educated at Dublin University, his expenses being borne by his uncle Godwin, an eminent lawyer, whose benevolence did not save him from the hot tongue of his tetchy nephew who in his autobiographical notes gravely declares him to have been "a little too dexterous in the subtler parts of the law." Swift's mind in

those days, as he himself tells us, "was like a conjured spirit which would do mischief if I did not give it employment."

From Dublin he went to Moor Park at Surrey as a secretary to Sir William Temple. His *locus standi* in this capacity was at first ill-defined and one can well imagine the anguish that the youth's haughty spirit underwent—already racked with the travail of genius—at finding himself in the position of an upper servant in the well-appointed country house of a pompous English gentleman. A cold, distant look from Sir William was sufficient, so Swift tells us, to put him at odds with himself for days together. In such an atmosphere, stiff, formal, and correct, the youthful satellite was at pains to exercise an ironic submission that ate into his very soul. It was as though a leopard were being fed on lettuce in a rabbit-hutch, or a vulture on groundsel seed in a parrot's cage.

It was a habit of his to relieve the constraint from which he suffered by rushing off at top speed, whenever occasion offered, to the summit of a neighbouring hill. There was only one congenial spirit in that conventional community, a little girl, probably a bastard daughter of Sir William Temple. Something about the sprightly personality of this child thawed the "chilly temper" of the awkward tutor. They were together always, in the cool, spacious library, in the stately oak-paneled hall, and in the ornate stone summer houses of the well ordered garden. "From those hours," as has been so well said, "the child and man went hand in hand into the eternity of sorrowful fame."

It was not, however, only the companionship of Stella which relieved the tedium and ignominy of those days; for it was Swift's custom to make periodical visits to his mother, walking, hedge-stick in hand, all the way from Surrey to Leicestershire. During these excursions he would sleep at the poorest ale-houses, paying sixpence for clean sheets and, in order the more to taste and relish the precious hours of his freedom, would hold familiar intercourse with the human riff-raff which is ever to be found up and down the English turnpike roads. In after years he put such experiences to good use, and it may well be that his peculiar style of writing, at once restrained and outspoken, owes much of its vigour to the curious juxtaposition in which he found himself between ministers of State and hedge-rogues. We know that William III as he strolled along the trim borders of Sir William Temple's kitchen garden expressed his liking for the young secretary by instructing him about the cutting of asparagus after the Dutch manner; may we not also conclude that the eccentric youth picked up from the acquaintanceships that he made on his Majesty's highways, other scraps of information equally pertinent to life? Just as at Sir William's board, he was in a position to observe at first hand the foibles and vanities of the great, so on many a sunny settle throughout the midland shires of England he was a constant witness of the grosser peculiarities of the rude and baseborn.

Sir William Temple died in 1699 and Swift, who had already taken orders, now entered upon that career of political pamphleteering which eventually won for him so exceptional a position in the history of those times.

In his "Battle of the Books" he had already showed unmistakable indications of his power. Could there be, for example, a more humorously graphic description of the sentiments of a testy spider disturbed by the floundering movements of a bee entangled in its web?

'A plague split you,' said he, 'for a giddy son of a whore. Is it you with a vengeance that have made this litter here? Could not you look before you, and be damned? Do you think I have nothing better to do, in the Devil's name, but mend and repair after your arse?'

This work was followed by the "Tale of a Tub," that extraordinary, profane and sceptical piece of writing in which it would seem that Swift wittingly offended against his own maxim that "the want of a belief is a defect which ought to be concealed when it can not be overcome." Under the guise of the elder brother Peter he directs his rancorous ridicule against the Roman Catholic Church with all its nice regulations for human conduct. Peter it was who insisted that brothers Martin and Jack—the Church of England and the dissenters—must "by no means break wind at both ends together, without manifest occasion." Even the divine consolation of the holy sacrament is treated with the utmost irreverence as a "remedy for the worms, especially those of the spleen"; and in reference to the perennial dispute concerning transubstantiation he makes the eldest brother roundly assert that the sacred wafer itself, far from being merely bread is "as true natural mutton as any to be had in Leadenhall Market."

In spite of such literary conceits, however, Swift remained throughout his life a zealous champion of the Church of England as by law established. It was chiefly for its sake that he came to play the part of a turn-coat and left the Whigs for the Tories, through whose patronage he won for himself the Deanship of St. Patrick's, Dublin.

Once safely installed in his deanery he lived in Ireland, "like a poisoned rat in a hole," the plague and scourge of all tyrants and at the last the bitter, misanthropic censor of the whole human race. "Gulliver's Travels" even, he tells us, was written "to vex rather than divert the world"; and this we can readily believe when we read passages such as the one describing the infant Yahoo, "I observed the young animal's flesh to smell very rank and the stink was somewhat between a weasel and a fox, but more disagreeable."

Perhaps it would be best, in order fully to acquaint the reader with his temper, to gather together a few haphazard quotations from his works.

I love only individuals, I hate and detest that animal called man.

When a true genius appears in this world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.

The merriest countenances are in mourning-coaches.

No wise man ever wished to be younger.

A very little wit is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plain by a parrot.

It is said of the horses in the vision that their power is in their mouths and in their tails. What is said of horses in the vision, in reality may be said of women.

What a fund of nice and curious observation is revealed in his scandalous "Directions to Servants." How these outrageous sentences seem at once to get under the lid of the decorous indelicacies of society, opening them wide, so to speak, to the sanative influence of light and air. Such "unconfined humour" has upon it the very stamp and signature of the man who is described as never laughing but "sucking in his cheeks to prevent it" when such a mood was upon him.

Rules that Concern All Servants in General.

When your master or lady calls a servant by name, if that servant be not in the way, none of you are to answer, for then there would be no end to your drudgery. Never come till you have been called three or four times; for nought but dogs will come at the first whistle; and when the master calls 'who's there?' no servant is bound to come. 'Who's there?' is no name.

Directions to the Nurse.

If you happen to let the child fall and lame it, be sure never confess it, if it dies all is safe.

. . . . to the House Maid.

When you have scoured the brasses and irons in the parlour-chimney, lay the foul wet clout on the next chair that your Lady may see that you have not neglected your work.

His poetry is just as unpardonable, revealing a propensity to expose everything, to gnaw down to the very bone. Probably Dryden was right when he said, "Cousin Swift, you will never make a poet," and yet these rhyming, facile verses will always possess a curious fascination for certain minds, for they express, in poetry that is no poetry, so morbid a reaction to the visible world. Was his incipient sickness revealing itself already in his tabid preoccupation with the excremental? Only a madman surely could make such giddy sport with dung and litter! Or is this fetid but at the same time strangely formal poetry merely the outcome of a spiritual sensitiveness recoiling with inexpressible bitterness from an ideal of beauty which does not bear too close an inspection.

It is, however, in his prose that one finds Swift's real power. How often when injustice is rampant in the world and nothing said, have lovers of liberty envied that inimitable style, whose searing quality of venomous satire could not only dislodge the mighty from their seats, but alter the very laws of the land!

Throughout what we may call the militant years of Jonathan Swift's life, "Stella" was not the only young girl who, in the words of Dr. Johnson, "from being proud of his praise grew fond of his person." In following his life it becomes apparent that there was something in the morbid construction of his uncommon temperament that enabled him to derive a wanton and perverted satisfaction from mental intercourse with immature women. Both in his journals to Stella and in his letters to Vanessa this curious preoccupation is quite evident. It was this denaturalized and extraordinary man's vice to make love not with his body but with his genius. This perilous pastime became a kind of obsession with him, an obsession which perhaps alone reconciled him to an existence for which as the years passed his distaste became more and more emphasized. His love letters are all written in ambiguous and masked language as though he half anticipated the fierce searchlight of inquiry that would be poured upon their pages by future generations. "Farewell, dear Sirrahs, dearest lives; there is peace and quiet with M D and nowhere else."

Esther Vanhomrigh, as the other Esther had done before her, followed her equivocal lover to Ireland only to discover that she was conjured to practise the utmost discretion with regard to the amphibolous relationship. "You have taught me to distinguish and now you leave me miserable," she wrote reproaching the Dean for his judicious abstentions.

Stella took alarm at the presence of a rival and managed to persuade Swift into marrying her, but even her triumph proved elusive for the Dean insisted upon the ceremony being performed with such rigid secrecy that to this day there are to be found those who hold to the opinion that it never took place at all.

Everybody knows what followed. Vanessa, distressed by a rumour of the wedding, wrote to Stella to have the matter cleared up. When the impolitic epistle was put into Swift's hands, he rode in a fit of blind rage to Marlay Abbey. He reached the place in the early morning and, going straight up to the bed-room of the unhappy woman, threw the incriminating document at her feet and turned on his heel.

without a word. A week later Vanessa was dead and underground, killed, so it was said, by the single venomous, asp-like look that her ferocious lover had given her.

There are other equally strange stories connected with him. One of the most significant of these is recounted by Delaney. On one occasion he saw the Dean hurrying away from Archbishop King to whom he had been speaking. "You have just met the most unhappy man who has ever lived," was the only comment vouchsafed by the circumspect prelate. What it was that had been said or confessed during that historic conversation has never been divulged. But whatever horrible thing was hag-riding the unfortunate man, worse was to follow.

In January, 1732, Stella died. She was buried at midnight in the Cathedral. Swift was too ill to be present; and indeed had to be carried to the back of the deanery so as not to be distracted into a frenzy by the lights that shone into his room from the lanterns of those who were occupied in putting into church-yard mould the body of the only woman he had ever loved. From that hour he never lifted "his sorry head" in mirth again. A blank and hopeless gloom wrapped itself about him. The record of those years is one of the most terrible episodes in all literary history. Never for a moment was he unaware of his impending doom. He knew that he would inevitably go mad.

He was observed one day standing under an elm tree the top branches of which were already fading. "I shall be like that; I shall die first at the top," he said. Once, when a heavy glass had fallen from its place nearly crushing him, and he was congratulated on his escape, he remarked simply, "I wish it had killed me." A servant passing near his room overheard the words of a desperate prayer, "that he should be taken away from the evil to come."

On the anniversaries of his birthday, when all Ireland was agog to do honour to the author of the "Drapier's Letters," and "A Modest Proposal," he would sit quietly at home and read the third chapter of the book of Job, wherein that ancient, long-suffering Jew curses the day on which he was born. Already he began to feel a change coming over him. "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" he said once, as he turned over the pages of the "Tale of a Tub." But worse was to follow.

An abscess as large as a hen's egg formed over his left eye, and for a month the ageing man howled out to the night in abject torment. Five servants could hardly prevent him from tearing out his own eyeball, and when the agony had passed he was left a lunatic. But was he? Occasionally, in spite of the strange aphasia by which he was afflicted, he would be heard to mutter words which to the awe of those who loved him seemed to denote that even yet, in some obscure way, he retained a ghastly and incredible consciousness.

More years passed by and still up and down the wide staircase and through the silent rooms of the deanery the figure that had been Jonathan Swift paced to and fro. Like a caged animal he ate his food—little chopped up pieces of meat—as he walked, and once he was found, with horrible contorted visage, threatening his own image in one of the tall mirrors. Once his cousin called to see him. "Go, go," he shrieked, and then pointing significantly to his head, "My best understanding." Once there escaped from him the simple tragic words, "I am a fool"; and this

from the lips of the man whom Addison had not hesitated to call the greatest genius of his age! Once more the devoted populace, as his birthday came round, lit bonfires, and paraded the streets, and rang the Dublin bells. The noise of their rejoicing came in through the open window and, to the dismay of the attendants, the idiot inmate uttered the words, "'Tis folly, better let it alone." At another time a knife was left within his reach, and he who removed it was shocked to hear as though in rebuke for his own prudent action, the ambiguous and impressive utterance, "I am what I am."

He died in his seventy-eighth year on 19 October, 1745. He lies buried in his own cathedral near the grave of Esther Johnson. Amongst the letters that he left, as though he wished even after death to bewilder the overcurious concerning the true significance of the deepest emotions of his life, was found an envelope containing one of Stella's tresses, "black as a raven's wing," with the four words, "only a woman's hair" inscribed upon it.

His worldly goods were left by his will for the construction of a mad house.

LLEWELYN POWYS.

#### LETTERS FROM A COUSIN: XIV.

LONDON. October, 1922.

I GATHER that nobody particularly wants to be Prime Minister of Great Britain, since the position is bound to entail more snubs and humiliations than even the thickest hide can endure, as Mr. Lloyd George's collection of stray wildcats are one by one let out of the bag. Apparently anyone who during the last four years would preface his remarks with "O, greatest man in the world!" could get a promise of what he wanted, and the next four years will reveal some very pretty and very amusing implications, as there have been visions about and some wild schemes for being richer and richer for ever and ever, Amen, though how people are to get money for their vices without some one somewhere doing some work is not explained. But apparently when savage man has the illusion of being victorious he dreams that God in person will turn to and make champagne grow where grapes grew before and caviar on toast ripen in the cornfields. The dream that has vanished is as crude as that, so crude indeed that ordinary decent people will not believe it and go on insisting pathetically that there must have been some remnant of sense in the minds of the Ministers who have been paid so handsomely for their—er, services, and I am looked upon as a wicked cynic for declaring the obvious, significant, hilarious fact that the bubble, like other bubbles, contains air. It is no good being pseudo-scientific and saying that air consists of nitrogen and oxygen: air is air, hot or cold, and bubbles contain air until they burst, and then the air contains them and one goes on breathing just the same.

All Mr. Lloyd George can say is: "I am a Great Man," and I imagine that he will go on saying it as long as he lives. He can say also with some support: "I am such a Great Man that no one can face the consequences of my mistakes." That is delightfully true. The organizations of which he is so vital a part can get out of their troubles only by ceasing to exist. The collapse of the Supreme Council throws the burden of Europe upon the unfortunate League of Nations which has neither the organization, nor the funds, nor the spirit to bear it. And when that has collapsed, what then? *Sauve qui peut*.

The most exasperating feature of politics is that the Opposition never anticipates the mistakes of the Administration. All our well-meaning radicals and Londonites have been spied by one small fact. They have remembered what Mr. Lloyd George long ago forgot, that he was Prime Minister of Great Britain. They respected the responsibility of the office, which he discarded like an old sock as soon as it was handed to him. When war-

mongering was over he turned to ego-mongering, dreaming Heaven only knows what fantasies of world-platforms and world-power, with only the politician's idea of money as stuff with which to purchase support for himself: not enough idea of money, indeed, to distinguish between capital and income and public and private funds. Sir Basil Zaharov had lots of money—about a pound a head for the millions slaughtered by the guns and munitions of his firm or firms. That puts the corpse-value of a human life at about one pound, or four dollars and forty-three cents. It also somewhat grimly reveals the real industry in which we are all engaged, since you can not even keep a current account in a bank without helping it on. A woman goes through her labour and produces a life that by hook or by crook must be cashed out at the current rate of exchange. Peace is out of the question because the only customers of armament-firms are Governments: therefore the more Governments the better (*vide* the treaty of Versailles), and modern politicians are only touts for Vickers, Krups, Bethlehem, etc. etc., and the other corpse-factories which blot out a life in China or Czechoslovakia and check in a pound, or four dollars and forty-three cents, in London or New York, the financial assumption being that one pound now is better than what you can gouge out of a man during his whole financial life.

Of course it is not thought of like that. It is not thought of at all. The readiest market for steel has been found to be with Governments—such an easy, such a ready, such a corrupt market that no real effort has been made to find any other. That the result is death and devastation has not been faced, and will not be faced if the politicians can help it. There is or has been money in the game: look at Sir Basil! The result is mental paralysis, which is the outstanding phenomenon in the life of Great Britain to-day. A hard tension has set in which sooner or later must break, but the minds caught in it are for ever useless. They have been sucked into a vacuum and destroyed.

The sudden awful realization of this was, I think, responsible for the hysterical outburst of the British Government over the Kemalist victory, the greatest humiliation that has ever been inflicted on a self-respecting community, the greatest and the most salutary with its implied confession that the inhabitants of these islands were incapable of dealing with their own troubles, and its revelation that the real difficulties of the British Government are at home and not at all in the East.

The social aspect (which is not to be confused with the political aspect) of life in these islands changed fundamentally with the removal of Bottomley and Northcliffe whose job it was to short-circuit the mass-intuition of the people. They did it very well, so well indeed that the politicians thought it had been done for ever and that nothing could ever shift or disintegrate their overwhelming majority in the House of Commons which blanketed all independent opinion and utterance, so much so indeed that the only personalities of any account during the last four years have been prize fighters whose occupation has no concern whatsoever with the finer issues of existence. Those issues obviously are a nuisance in the smooth running of a corpse-factory with its attendant solaces of champagne and caviar on toast.

My humour takes this grim turn largely because I am so happy in the collapse of the swindle which is funnier even than my humour. I take it that the next move will be to set up the League of Nations as a customer of the munition-mongers and we shall have a United Europe prepared to take on Africa, Asia and America; Governments being ruined, the politicians must take refuge in a super-Government, or disappear into almshouses, or be charitably supported by their families, or fall back upon those guileless Henry Dubbs the publishers who, as propaganda-agents during the war, have all blown out their businesses to the bursting-point—so swollen do men become when they feel themselves in contact with the officialry. If the officials descend on the publishers there will be a collapse into something like a revolution in the literary world, the one thing needed to galvanize us out of our mental (and moral) paralysis.

Until that happens nothing can happen. London can not deal with its financial commitments in various parts of the world until thought and moral judgment are permitted as a matter of course and as essential social activities. They have been taboo since 1916 because Mr. Lloyd George is incapable of thought and has no more glimmering of the meaning of moral judgment than a boy of ten, which, indeed, I think, is exactly what he is: a boy of ten with such an incorrigible habit of stealing the jam out of the pantry that at last his mother reconciles herself to losing one pot in six and says, each time, "It is only David!"

I don't think I shall need to write any more about the absurd little man who dropped the whole of the British Empire off into a Welsh *hwyl* so violent that neither he nor it could ever come back again. A *hwyl* is a psychic storm in which a Welshman loses all sense of reality in an epileptic illusion of divinity. The Scots know all about it too, but they are educated enough to know how to use it without making a parade of it. I think the Jews know something of it also, but they apply it to money and to nothing else, while the Turk, who is a realist, leaves it to the occasional dervish, and so, like Mr. Dick, "puts us all right."

I am reluctant to leave London because the events of this winter should be so vastly entertaining. All we need in our Prime Minister is good manners and good looks which, after all, is the only thing the world has ever expected of the English; good horses, good seamanship, good manners and good looks—and we have ruined ourselves in labouring to produce the two things most foreign to us: virtue and intelligence! We could get no farther in that direction than pedantry and an incredible mental dishonesty, which, at the turning point, have overmastered us in this business of the Dardanelles—which business, I suppose, has been only one among many moves to do in Russia what King Leopold did in the Congo, since nothing apparently will teach us that in the long run it is not cheaper to get your raw materials without paying for them; just as in the long run it is not easier to be Prime Minister without a policy, except that, as now, it has the advantage that no one wants to succeed you.

GILBERT CANNAN.

## PHANTOM.

### XLI

THE step which Vigottschinsky and I planned to take with regard to Aunt Schwab was successful. It is fairly indifferent how we imposed upon her, and what we made her believe. I have already told how she had displayed with respect to my matrimonial project a credulity that was incomprehensible to me, how she had put stock in my poetic illusions and other chimeras. If I look for explanations to-day, I find several. She had gained her unshakable confidence in me at a time when I thoroughly justified it. She knew me as sober and cautious from the assistance I had previously given her in business affairs. She revered in me a spirit of scrupulous uprightness which to be sure at the same time disquieted her and caused her to grant me only a partial insight into her business.

In the attempt to unravel the entanglements of deceit, one gets lost in the labyrinth of its eternal obscurities. So, for example, I thought that my aunt was purposely using my unsuspecting honesty to deceive herself and others. Really, she had formed her judgment of me once for all, and had filed the documents away, so to speak. The riddle I now presented she approached from the old standpoint, though it had now become a false one. Besides, my good aunt knew very well that she had sunk below the social plane of her parents. But calluses had formed over this sore spot in her consciousness, and under such circumstances, as is well known, they are doubly thick. Accordingly, my aunt thought herself convinced, in spite of all, that she could move in the highest society on equal terms, wherefore she was about as favourably affected by my advance in that direction as one morphium-addict by the confession of another one. After

all, my aunt had a true and genuine respect for intellect. Although she unscrupulously exploited to the utmost painters, actors, musicians, singers, young *littérateurs*, and so on, yet they were the object of her frequently almost idolatrous admiration, whereof an autograph-album which she possessed, with many famous names in it, gave clear evidence. Hence she took it as an accomplished fact when her nephew declared that he would presently move upward into these envied circles, all the more that this would at once be balm to her wound and nourishment to her presumption.

We had then, that is Vigottschinsky and I, coaxed out of my aunt a considerable sum, indeed a substantial capital, with which we established an office in the little furnished room of the Austrian. The fist-fight in front of the Vincent house had broken up the relation between my sister and her lover. I had done my share in this and had met her several times for that purpose. Strange, I had never come so close to my sister before, nor she to me. Only now had I come to understand her, from my eccentric point of view, and by this very alteration in my nature I possessed an attraction for her. She was capable and honest at bottom, and she now threw in her lot with mine again, partly out of a craving for kinship, partly because I had fought and suffered for her. We found pleasure in each other, and enjoyed the unalloyed pleasure of feeling that after so many years of living together we had only just discovered each other.

To be sure, the bond that now united us would hardly have held very long without Vigottschinsky. It was some time before I found this out.

For the moment I suspected nothing when he proposed to take Melanie into our firm, as it were, and turn the clerical work over to her. Of course I knew she could make better progress with her pen than I or my brother Hugo.

Our office was a long slit with a single window from which one looked down at the entrance to the Lobe Theatre. Vigottschinsky's bed stood in it, and there was just room enough to squeeze past it in reaching the desk, which stood by the window. The room had old dark wallpaper, which hung down in spots. Moreover it was high and hence quite sinister.

Four weeks passed in conference in this room. These conferences were, however, nothing more than objectless chatter, which was spiced with immoderate drinking and smoking, and which became a pleasure that we sought again and again.

Objectless chatter is perhaps not a fitting expression, because it did not indeed turn on actual and sensible objects, but so much the more on imaginary and senseless ones. These have the strongest power of attraction for worthless people. Air-castle-builders and idlers of every sort know that. My sister was a permanent member of that company.

At that time I had strangely arrived at the settled conviction that I had succeeded in the moral redemption of my sister, in lifting her out of the dens of vice. I was so blinded as to see a further piece of good luck in Vigottschinsky's liking for her, especially since it was returned and had led to an engagement. This engagement, a marriage, what could be better adapted to win back my sister to the ranks of honest citizens?

It was astonishing to see the power that Vigottschinsky had gained over the beautiful girl. Her self-will, her upright nature, her contradictory spirit were as if blotted out. I had long since had to form suspicions of the nature of the relation that connected my sister and my friend. But I had too much to contend with in myself, and both Vigottschinsky and Melanie left nothing undone to make their relation appear like a serious, straightforward, and lawful one.

In the Lobe Theatre they were playing evening after evening "Around the World in Eighty Days." Towards nine o'clock they regularly executed on the stage a surprise-attack by Indians, whose shots one could plainly hear in our room. Our longing to travel, to roam through the wide world, was of course always freshly excited by this. We dreamed of adventures, fairy lands, and riches.

In this and other ways time was squandered and money wasted, without our making a beginning at any business, reliable or unreliable.

I had resigned my post in the municipal office as soon as I had the money from my aunt in my pocket. However, it was not quite easy to take leave of my place by the window of the city hall, because that meant giving up my view of the whipping-post as well. To my office-chief I had little by little conveyed a fairy tale concerning the change in my fortunes, in which, quite seriously, a rich marriage and incipient literary fame were alternately stressed more or less. But the strangest part of it all was that I believed the fairy tale myself.

#### XLII

So we were merchants now and had to put on a good social front. It was not possible to do business without that. Vigottschinsky very soon cut quite a good figure, although he did not spend on his outfit half as much as I. They say that people with a hump-back, or with a limp like mine, not infrequently have the inclination to trick themselves out in a ridiculous fashion. I too fell a prey to this inclination. I thought I owed it to my business, to my importance as an author, and to the idol of my love, to make a complete dandy of myself. So I bought myself white collars and expensive linen, four or five stylish suits, patent leathers, gloves, cravats, hats, provided myself with a stick-pin, cuff-buttons, and a gold watch, and when I was thus togged out and in my silk-lined summer overcoat was striding up and down Schweidnitz Street, I never passed a show-window without mirroring my idolized person in it.

It goes without saying that we also used my aunt's capital on every possible occasion to give ourselves a good time. Every day we went to beer-halls and beer-gardens, and sometimes to those unpretentious wine-rooms that can be found in Breslau.

It would be a mistake to assume that I did anything at this or at any time without reference to my absurd goal. The picture of Veronica Harlan—not the one that lies before me, but the imaginary one—did not leave me for an instant, nor the thought of it. Of course she is in truth the epitome of sweetest loveliness, and was still more so in the intoxicating exhalations of my soul. Always I stood under the spell of a constraint that completely enslaved me, but at the same time turned my slavery into ecstasy. But at the heart of this ecstasy dwelt pain and despair.

#### XLIII

I look back upon my completed existence from a distant, lofty, secure position. I survey the path, the network of roads, and the landscape from which a happy exit was finally found after all. The Lorenz Lubota of today, whom my father-in-law and wife call Lenz, has made the Lorenz Lubota of the past the object of his meditation. Lenz! They call me Lenz! Well, why not? Is not every spring<sup>1</sup> preceded by the stormy November, the dark December, the ice- and snow-bound January, in short by autumn and winter? Perhaps they are not so far wrong in this appellation, if it is to suggest new sprouts and the blossoms of future fruits. Is there not growing up here perhaps, under the calm strokes of my pen, a fruit? Is the air of my spirit not pregnant with sprouts and strange blossoms? To be sure, this spring that I am living through to-day is nothing compared with the one that in those days passed over my soul, with its warm showers, fantastic blooms, burning suns, and delirious tempests, when we were engaged in squandering the gold of our first plunder. Exuberant raptures like those of that day have never since swelled my breast to bursting, but to be sure no more pains have harrowed it such as were then my daily bread. For it should by no means be thought that my condition at that time was nothing but sheer rapture. I had, rather, the feeling that blood was being sucked out of my heart by some great spider day and night. Hence I have written, as I see in paging these leaves, that a pain was the innermost core of all the raptures I felt; and that pain was very great.

<sup>1</sup>Translator's note. *Lenz* is a German word for spring.

Or what can be more terrible than to show to a thirst-parched throat the mirage of the coolest spring? A morbid, lying, deceptive certainty, whereby the voice of hopelessness has been buried and violently silenced. What can be more painful than the occasional waking of the sleepwalker, even though he succeed in saving himself from a plunge into the depths by clinging to the eaves-trough? Can a man who is fundamentally honest completely forget that he is so, and put his conscience to death? I at least never had the feeling of guiltlessness when I was running through my aunt's money, even though I did not exactly let the feeling of guilt rise in me. I mostly used to gulp down the dainties of the restaurants like so much gall and poison, even though I did not know it outwardly. Besides, I was, so to speak, gutted by a terrible passion. A conflagration raged within me. I could have cried out to my judges that all my insane commissions and omissions came down to nothing more than the attempt to put out this ravaging fire. I could have proved it to them, or else I may possibly succeed in doing it with this memoir. I could have wished to throw myself under the wheels of an omnibus, I have somewhere said. Not once, I may add, but countless times did I think of that. I also considered putting an end to myself by drowning in the Oder, or with the bullet or the rope. But from all this I was restrained by the thought that I should thereby leave the earth on which Veronica was living.

I do not conceal from myself that if I had attained the presumptuous goal I then sought, the plane of happiness secured by it would have been a very different and much higher one than that plane upon which I can stand to-day in peace of soul. Earthly rapture would then have attained to a supernatural degree and would have perhaps been unendurable to a mere mortal in its all-overshadowing, blinding splendour. I confess that in spite of being wholly cheerful and content in my peaceful little circle, I have in this respect not made a full renunciation. Only I have transferred all fulfilments of that sort into the "better life."

GERHART HAUPTMANN.

(Translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan.)  
(To be continued.)

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

### DEVOTEES OF A NEW RELIGION.

SIRS: It is a warm Sunday afternoon in September. I have just taken up the latest copy of the *Freeman* to learn what is the feature number in this week's Great American Comedy, when I hear the beat of a drum, the tramp of marching feet and a loud, lively song. It sounds somewhat like a religious song, and might easily be "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," or "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The thought runs through my head, "Why they must be having a Sunday-school convention here and a big parade is probably coming down the street." But then I remember that I am in Bulgaria and that over here there are no Sunday-school conventions, at least not in this little city, a town of ten thousand people about forty miles south of Sofia. I get up and go out to the street and am very well rewarded for my effort, very well rewarded even for laying aside the *Freeman*.

Down the street, behind a vociferously jubilant drum and a gorgeous red flag of imposing dimensions, comes a long line of children and youth. The children are clad in red, the young men all wear flaming red shirts of the Russian variety—the kind that hangs down outside the trousers—and the young ladies all wear blouses of the same glowing hue. On the arm of every marcher is a small white emblem, representing a sickle and a hammer. The little girls have tied red ribbons in their hair and their older sisters have bound narrow red bands around their heads over which their curls flutter attractively. They are all marching with the precision and vehemence of trained soldiers. A young official of some kind, also scarlet clad, keeps them in perfect formation. Every one is smiling and happy. They are all as erect as royal guards and as eager as spirited horses. The drum beats, the flag

waves and down the street they go, triumphantly singing.

That was a Communist Sunday-school, or a Bolshevik Y. M. C. A. without the C. That group of young people represents one of the most extraordinary social phenomena in South-eastern Europe. They are devotees of a new religion, bearers of a new gospel and heralds of a new day. The Communists here, altogether without intending it and knowing it, have started a spiritual movement which in a great many respects is more akin to first-century Christianity than anything the world has seen for centuries.

Of course they are atheists; they hate the Church, despise professional Christians and detest the priests. They also talk incessantly about revolutions, threaten to cut off whole mountains of heads and picture continually the oceans of blood they are about to spill. They give innumerable talks hours and hours in length about Karl Marx, economic determinism, capital and the like. They print an equal number of articles equally long about these same dry and unpleasant subjects. But all of these things are the merest incidentals and are not vitally connected with the Communist movement here: Marx hasn't much more to do with the exuberant enthusiasm with which the young people have taken up Communism than Herod or Erasmus or Casanova has had. This movement does not spring from the teachings of Marx or Lenin, although both of course are members of the Communist trinity; nor is it primarily economic in character. It is a spiritual movement emanating from the people and it flourishes because it gives great spiritual satisfaction to large numbers of them. For example, this movement holds before the poor and oppressed and hopeless the vision of a new day, a new era, a new social order. This is just what first-century Christianity did. The early Christians called the expected good times God's kingdom; these folks call it the Communist State and the dictatorship of the proletariat. About the manner in which the new era is to come the Bulgarian Communists agree with the first-century Christians. These latter expected it to come with a bang and a crash, anticipated that most people in the world would be killed off and that the Christian proletariat would triumph, forming a dictatorship of their group under the direction of the Lord. The Bulgarian Communists teach that a big revolution will take place pretty soon, in which the world will be rocked to its foundations, all the iniquitous capitalists will be killed off and the poor will be carried on the clouds of victory to a new kingdom or rather to a new despotism of peace, plenty, brotherliness, justice and knowledge.

Just as the early Christians eagerly scanned the skies for signs of a second coming, so the Bulgarian Communists scan the papers for signs of a great world-revolution. As the Christians are always discovering signs of the expected cataclysm, so the Communists announce every week or so that the revolution is at hand and that we must prepare for the appointed time. But there was no second coming and there will be no revolution. There will never be any new era. No new order is going to come. Still there will always be hope for a new order and the group that gives expression to such a hope in songs, speeches, stories, books, papers, conversations and prayers will win the allegiance of the young and the poor, the weary and the heavy laden, who are always eager for a new day. This hope has taken a deep hold on the Bulgarian youth and the Bulgarian proletariat—the poor folks. Mothers, tired and sleepy, after a hard week's work, listen for hours to beautiful and glowing descriptions of the new day until they feel upon their faces the refreshing breezes from the promised land, and they go home to work and suffer and sacrifice in patience against the good time that is coming. The young men and women listen to thunderous, prophetic denunciations of present-day wrongs and to stupendous descriptions of to-morrow's peace and justice until their souls become aflame and they go out with foreheads flung high to lead poor deluded mankind into the promised land, into the new city of mankind.

Then again these reds are desperate internationalists. They utterly disregard or even hate their national flag,

the Bulgarian flag. That's awful, isn't it? Why, of course it is. But it's vehemently liberating, emancipating and exhilarating. It makes a person over. It re-creates him and lifts him up and gives him strength. It goes without saying that such a person is a crank and a fanatic and in all probability is altogether deluded, but he is powerful, especially just after a war, a useless and unlucky war. When you find a group of twenty, thirty, or fifty thousand men who are willing before all the world, before policemen and soldiers, ministers and kings, to trample on their national flag and to spread to the winds a great red international emblem, then you have a stupendous force which is able to rend empires and to draw a great many young people unto it.

These youth who have just gone tramping past us with so much joy and confidence are world-citizens, brothers and sisters of all humanity, members of the great universal family. That makes them feel big. They look down on us folks who go around prattling about our little flag, boasting our little State and rattling our little sword. They have a big job on, they are solving world-problems and they have no time to putter about with little wars against their neighbours on account of a boundary-quarrel or a barrel of gasoline. As for national honour, that is sheer rubbish to them; it seems childish. They are out to make all the nations one. They are after a new Heaven and a new earth; they are marching to a new Jerusalem. In all this they are very similar to the early Christians.

Then again, this movement has re-created the poorer and weaker class of people in this country. It has made a "third race" just as the early Christians did. The proletariat has suddenly become conscious of itself. It has begun to respect itself. It feels strong and proud; it talks with a loud voice and shakes its fist. No longer can you impose on these people. No longer can you treat them with condescension and with favours. No longer can you order them around and show them their places. No longer can you misgovern them with impunity. They do just as they please. They think the world belongs to them. Look at those young people again, who just marched past us. How determined and triumphant they were. What airs they did put on. How athletic those young men appeared and how pretty the girls—red certainly does brighten people up—and how they did tramp down the street, just as if they would mash you into pulp if you got in their way. They seemed to be saying all the time, "Don't you wish you were a young Communist making this rotten old world over?"

How they do scorn all the rest of the world. How they laugh at the officers and ridicule the priests and make fun of the bankers and the bankers' children. These red people think that every holiday is just for them, and that all the old Bulgarian heroes were Communists and that history is filled with the records of their exploits. They have their own papers and magazines and halls and evening schools and songs and poems and novels and dramas. They completely ignore us other people. They think that they are the chosen people, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. They tell all the young folks that if they want to be anybody they must come over and join up with them; and when they do get a new member they puff him all up and make him feel that they were holding up the whole show just waiting for him to come in.

What a going concern it all is! What vigour and vim and "pep"! In every city, Communists; in every village, Communists; everywhere, Communist clubs; on every billboard, Communist signs; every holiday, Communist parades; and once every year, a great Communist day when thirty thousand people march through the capital, when everybody goes on a picnic, when all work is stopped and the world left to get along just any old way it can.

How these reds do give! Every Communist—they are all poor people getting from five to ten dollars a month—has given two weeks' or a month's salary to the starving Russians. A mob burnt down their main building in the capital some time ago, but these poor reds, all undaunted, chipped in money, work and material, and now within less than a year they are completing a very much larger building, one of the finest in Sofia. They have one of the

biggest printing presses in Bulgaria and the most widely circulated paper, and no end of books. They have meetings all the time, everywhere, addressed by the most impudent and eloquent orators in the country.

And what discipline! Every one has to fall in line. Everybody has to straighten up, and keep step, with chest out and head thrown back. No monkeyshines here, no disorder and no rumpuses. Drinking is diminished, smoking is forbidden in many meetings, women are placed on an equality with men and a whole new tone is given to the life of these people.

Almost everything that a young person wants he finds among the Communists. Of course he wants pals, but they are all his pals. He wants games and excursions and dances and parties, and the Communists give him all these things. He wants to declaim, make speeches and deliver orations, and of course the Communist clubs are just the place for such things. He wants to study and develop himself, and he finds an opportunity in the Communist night-classes. He wants to go out and see his girl. Over here it is not proper for him to visit her in her home or on the street, but he can always see her at the Communist meetings. Of course the young Bulgarian, like every other youth, wants to fight something, but are not the Communists engaged in an eternal fight with the whole world? He wants to be president or secretary of something; well, he can not keep from being elected to some office in the various Communist organizations. Mothers want mothers' meetings to learn more about foods and children, and the Communists are the people who arrange meetings for mothers. Perhaps some one wants a job. If he is a Communist, the Communists will probably find one for him. What the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., the social settlements, the employment-agencies, the women's clubs and such organizations do for Americans, the Communists are trying to do for the Bulgarians, and almost no one but the Communists is making an effort to do these things.

Naturally this movement has swept over the whole country, capturing the whole proletariat and most of the youth. Just imagine! there are Communist clubs among army officers and a large proportion of the primary teachers are Communists. At the polls the Communists have elected the municipal Governments in a large number of the more important cities. They represent the second strongest party in Bulgaria. They circulate far more literature than any other group. They are the most vigorous and energetic social group in the land.

Of course they will not start a revolution. They will not undertake to lop off any heads. The red sun of the new day is not going to dawn in a red sky over a red sea of capitalistic blood. They sing about these things and make a great deal of noise about them, but that's all; they take it out in talk. These words are all a part of their theology and mean just as much to them as our theology does to us. They sound well in songs and speeches but they are not meant to be applied. Christians of course do not apply their theology; they do not turn the other cheek or refuse to go to war, or love their enemies so that anyone can notice it. They do not consider that Heaven is important enough to justify them in making much of a sacrifice for it, and they do not believe a thousandth part of what they say about Hell. If they really want help they do not count on angels to bring it and not one Christian in ten thousand really expects the second coming to take place soon. Most Christians are not half as bad as the gory God they proclaim and likewise these Communists are not anywhere near as fierce as their theology. They are respectable and reasonable, have houses and gardens and cows and big families, are as human as anybody else and are working hard so as to lay something by for their old age.

Their movement is not primarily economic, but social and spiritual. It has given the poorer and weaker people self-respect and pride, friends and comrades, hopes and dreams, bright visions of a new day and an exultant feeling that they are the people destined to bring in the golden age—the golden age which will never come. I am, etc.,

R. H. MARKHAM.

## MISCELLANY.

FOR the benefit of Mr. Lloyd George, I should like to borrow somewhat from Mr. H. G. Wells's "Vision of Judgment," with permission to corrupt the story for my own ends. Let us suppose then, that the Last Trump has sounded. The High Court of Heaven is as full as the subway at five o'clock, and everybody is pushing and shoving to get within a few light-years of the throne. The Recording Angel begins to call the roll, and by the time he gets down to G, the Lord is tired out. "George," says the Recording Angel. "George what?" says the Lord. "Lloyd George," says the Angel. "Which one?" says the Lord. "Politics 875,762." Then the Lord stoops over and picks up something out of the crowd. "Let's see . . . I guess this is the one. Well, what's *your* story?" The little man climbs out on the end of the Lord's finger, and begins to make a speech. By and by the Lord leans over and says, "Do you really think you *did* all that? What does the record show?" "A blank page, sir," says the Recording Angel, waking up. "I thought so," says the Almighty with a yawn. "I'll just have him follow the procession for a while longer, until he learns what the job amounts to; and when I come back from lunch, I want you to bring me somebody who originated something—I don't care much what it is."

THE star event of the whole musical season, as far as I am concerned, may be already over. A "hunch" took me last Saturday night to hear the string quartet that has just arrived from Trieste, about which I knew nothing except that a press-agent's statement said it was the best in Italy. I have been a devout hearer of quartets all my life, but I never heard or imagined anything like this one. These four men played as a single great virtuoso—I closed my eyes and imagined that I was listening to some Sarasate playing four instruments at once. I would hardly have believed that ensemble-playing could take on to that degree the quality of the virtuoso, if I had not heard it. The programme was admirable—the C-minor of Boccherini and the E-minor (opus 59) of Beethoven, and between them the highly colourful, very interesting, but at the same time very histrionic G-minor of Debussy. Before the concert I would have said that I knew just how the second movement of that old quartet of Boccherini should be played; but I soon discovered that this was a mistake.

THE second movement of the Debussy quartet brought back to my mind a remark that was dropped in my hearing last winter by the French soprano Gauthier, apropos of "modern" music. She said that if a man had spent twenty-five or thirty years in diligent labour over the classics of his trade, and then branched out and began to try his hand at experiment and innovation, one could have some sort of respect for his enterprise; but otherwise, not. I have long had just this feeling with respect to innovation and experiment in literature. If a poet, for instance, really knows the classics of poetry—really knows them—and has worked in classical form and method long enough to acquire its discipline, then he is justified in doing all the experimenting that he likes; he is then respectably qualified for experimentation. But the desultory and miscellaneous experimentation of raw persons who have not undergone this discipline and do not even know what it is, can not be regarded as anything but mere effrontery, and the experimenters themselves as a nuisance.

SIGNS are setting in of a comforting surcease from the afflictive sentimentalization of Youth which has so long overspread the land. I wonder how much of it was genuine. For my own part, I never liked Youth. There are certain young individuals—precious few of them too—whom I like; but Youth in the abstract, and its glamour and promise, over which people rhapsodize at such a rate, never interested me. Youth seems to me a sort of necessary evil, a tedious thing to be gotten over as best one may. This is heresy, probably; yet I should be glad to know how many of the sentimentalists really, in their

hearts, like Youth any better than I do. I never met any who did. After they had blown off their fizz and pop and effervescence, the real stuff of their affection for Youth turned out to be as thin as my own. It always reminded me of the sentimental Northern abolitionist's affection for the Negro.

ONE most respects Youth, I think indeed, on account of its quick and accurate insight into just such wishy-washy humbug as this, and its power of resenting it. Continuing my confessions, I never pretended to like children or youngsters, or to expect anything of them, but I always respected them; and I have invariably found that they meet this attitude much more handsomely and appreciatively than they do that of the sentimentalists. Show them that they are not going to be humbugged by sentimentalism or bamboozled by a conventional view of them or their circumstances, and I will say to their credit that they make a handsomer response, nine times out of ten, than grown-ups do. Most parents have too much sentimental attachment to their children, and too little respect for them. I got the measure of this sort of parental affection during the war, especially in England, where it was a matter of sheer hysterical vainglory to have had a child or two killed or hideously wounded, and parents whose children escaped these distinctions seemed really to feel uncomfortable about it.

JOURNEYMAN.

## THE THEATRE.

### THE LIVING STAGE.

THERE is something in the nature of the theatre that makes realism a natural and a thoroughly unsatisfactory method of expression. Its principal material, the actor, is too near actuality. It is no triumph of art to make a flesh-and-blood man named Grant Mitchell into a flesh-and-blood man named Andrew Lane, especially when the heart of the whole business is the elaborate pretence that there really isn't any actor, and there really isn't any theatre, and we are really looking through the fourth wall of a room in the next village.

Obviously, more than any other art, the theatre is close to life. Literature uses printed signs of a very arbitrary and formal nature, which we translate into words forming ideas and mental pictures, which, in turn, may suggest human beings and their emotions. Music employs sounds, some of which faintly suggest bird-notes or the rumble of the heavens, but none of which comes within shouting-distance of the human voice. Painting makes use of pieces of canvas and lumps of coloured clays, and these it arranges in patterns through which, by custom and habit, we are able to gain an impression of a curiously flattened life. Even sculpture, literal as its rounded, three-dimensional shapes ordinarily are, must use the intermediary of clay or rock. The theatre is the one art that works in the materials of life itself. It employs life to render life. Painting, architecture, and sculpture may supply a background to the actor, but the actor is the centre of the play, and when he speaks the words of literature he speaks them as the actual human being with whom they are supposed to originate.

The actor brings the theatre far too close to life to please some of its great lovers. The actuality of the actor affrights them. Gordon Craig, once an actor and always a true partisan of the theatre, has felt this. He has found the actor too much a piece of life, too much a creature of the emotions, and too little an impersonal and dependable tool of the artist. "The actions of the actor's body, the expression of his face, the sounds of his voice, all are at the mercy of the winds of his emo-

tions." He is not clay, he is not stone, he is not curves of ink, he is not arbitrary sounds produced from wood or brass. He is life itself, and a very irregular and undependable part of life. Therefore, says Craig, the thing that the actor gives us is not a work of art; "it is a series of accidental confessions."

Now the contrast between the pliant and well-behaved clay and the intractable actor is interesting; and there is a certain significance in the fact that when Craig describes the work of the actor as a series of "accidental confessions," he uses a phrase which would delight the harshest of the realists—the writers who practised naturalism, the literal transcription of the irregularities of life. But the issue goes deeper. The actor is essential to the theatre. He can not be turned out for a glorified puppet, an *Uebermarionette*. But perhaps he can be told that he is far too near life and its accidents to spend his time imitating them. To give us life and its significance the dramatist, like workers in the other arts, needs an intermediary. If the actor is not a true intermediary, because he is a part of life, the dramatist has only to see that he can go beyond the actuality of the physical actor to Form. With the creative vitality of the living actor to awaken us and make us sensitive and responsive, the dramatist may strive to reach beyond outward truth to that inner truth which presents itself to us in deliberate and natural arrangements of life.

It is no easy thing to tell what is meant by the word Form when we take it past the idea of the design of things in a literal sense, and apply it to significance in the design of life. But it is easy to say that Form has nothing whatever to do with representation or illusion. As Mr. Clive Bell points out in his book, "Art," in which he makes a brilliant plea for what he calls "significant form" as the test of visual art, the fact that a thing is representative does not at all suggest either the presence or the absence of Form. It does not preclude its having Form just as it does not in the least assure it. The theatre will always have the physical body of the actor, and to that extent it will always be representational. But that is certainly all it need have of illusion. What the actor says and the atmosphere in which he appears may be absolutely non-representational. Even his physical body, as he uses it, may take on qualities outside and beyond illusion.

It remains the dramatist's special business to master the extremely difficult task of fighting through to Form while retaining the realistic technique, or else—which seems far better—frankly to desert realism, representation, illusion, and write directly in significant terms, no matter how unpleasurable they may be. After all, common sense sees that it is better to concentrate all of an artist's technical energies on the major thing he wishes to accomplish. Mr. Bell says of the men and women of the future: "When they think of the early twentieth-century painters they will think only of the artists who tried to create Form—the artisans who tried to create illusions will be forgotten." It is equally true that the artist who tries to create illusion is more than likely to forget to create Form.

Now creating Form does not mean hiding the actuality of the actor under strange robes. There seems to be a curious notion abroad that the alternative to realism is romance. It is true that in trying to escape out of realism a number of playwrights have avoided reality and wandered into the

never-never-land of Thalanna and Kongros. It is also true that modern sciences, history, archaeology, and psychology, have made the past new and real and alive again, and that certain playwrights have seen in the rejuvenated ages a chance to escape the realistic and to attain more permanent values. But it is not true that the present offers smaller opportunities. Expressionist playwrights have already shown this conclusively enough; witness Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape."

Theatrical history has never been as popular with theatrical reformers as it should be. It shows not only that the realistic technique is a matter of the last half century, and that the greatest periods of the theatre's history were non-realistic, but it shows also that even when realism was an impossible idea, and when expressive, significant Form was the only thing at which the playwright aimed, the theatre and its audiences usually lived frankly and healthfully in the present.

Greek tragedy, to be sure, was not a thing of the present—except in the reality of its religious emotion. Its heroes came out of the past. They did not talk or act like the Athenians that watched them. They even dressed according to a set convention of their own. In every way the Greek tragic theatre embraced Form, directly and naturally. It was in the temperament of the Greeks. Their sculpture was realistic to a degree never before reached and not surpassed in physical truth to-day; yet from these statues we gain a sense of Form far more significant than the sense of life which they give us. Representation was not an end to the Greek artist. The dramatist of Athens felt no desire to "humanize" his heroes or to make them like the people about him in any particular. The drama was religious in origin and had not yet grown temporal. So long as the Greek mind had its fondness for Form, there could be no demand for the smallest actuality.

But man's natural fondness for "humanness" and "recognition" found plenty of opportunity for expression after the passing of the great Greeks; and it was satisfied in almost every case without breaking in too sharply on the heart of the drama, expression of Form. The mediæval religious drama was both religious and temporal. The saints were very much of the times in clothes and in habits. The Bible characters lived the lives and wore the garments and showed the mental traits of people of the Middle Ages. Shakespeare dipped back into history and into romance, too, but his Italian nobles dressed like Londoners—his Roman "mechanicals" were British workmen, and his Athenian yokels came out of the English countryside. Molière "modernized" the Roman rascal Phormio into the Neapolitan rascal Scapin, and the ordinary Parisian gentleman served him for Alceste. Phœdra and Iphigénie were not so very Greek. In England, tragedians down to Garrick, Siddons and Kemble, played Shakespeare in the costumes of their own day. And do you suppose that all this had the slightest effect on the plays, or any bearing on their expression of the inner Form rather than the outward shape of life? In spite of the flesh-and-blood actor, clothed in the costumes of the time, the playwright was saved from mere representation, from all this peep-hole business of realism. Doubtless he was saved because the temper of his time was not corrupted and twisted and tortured by the unholy union of science and capitalism. But it is rather interesting to remember that the

actors appeared in theatres that were so utterly unreal, so essentially theatrical, that nobody could imagine for a moment that he was standing with his eye glued to a chink in the fourth wall.

The theatres of the past united the temporal and the eternal, the passing moment and the permanent Form, partly from innocence, and partly from a natural ability to understand things better in their own terms. We, too, can grasp more of the Form of life if we see it derived from the life we know. But this does not mean that the Elizabethans had the slightest interest in the things that have absorbed our stage—plausibility, representation, resemblance. To-day we are beginning again to desire reality of soul instead of mere reality of body. We want to know about our own time and our own people, but we do not care to learn how imperfectly, how haltingly, a modern, realistic Hamlet would express his thoughts on suicide.

It is easy enough to see how much Shakespeare's greatest tragedy would have lost if he had written like Galsworthy. Not only would poetry of word have disappeared, but poetry of idea as well. Moreover, the ability of a character to express himself would have been hideously confined within the formula of plausibility. Perhaps as great an artist as Shakespeare could have written his tragedy without permitting a single person to speak an inner thought that time and circumstance could not bring out, but I am a little inclined to doubt it; and I am very sure that the vitality and the effectiveness of such a work of unnatural and straining effort would have been as nothing beside the vitality and effectiveness of the "Hamlet" we know.

For twenty years the European stage has been struggling over the problem of plausibility and resemblance in setting. The new movement in the theatre has spent half the time devising mechanisms and technique for achieving genuine representation instead of the bastard thing that tried to make a dining-room out of badly painted and flimsy canvas, and the rest of the time trying to get rid of this machinery and this technique in order to escape the realism which demanded such things. In Stockholm one sees the touring company of the Moscow Art Theatre playing realistic plays in the sort of ugly, cheap, old setting that Craig, Reinhardt and Belasco set their faces against. In Dresden one sees Shaw's "Pygmalion" played at the State Schauspielhaus in settings as solid and illusive as stone and wood. In Paris one sees the Russian, Georges Pitoëv, giving Andreyev's "He Who Gets Slapped" in black curtains with four ribbons looped up to indicate the form of a circus-tent, and Chekhov's "The Seagull" in settings which go back to the old flapping canvas flats again, admitting that the theatre is a place of pretence, and which then attempt—not very successfully—to give these flats, in colour and outline, the form of the play.

Still farther along the way from realism to an expressionist stage, one finds Copeau's naked stage in Paris that unites frankly with the auditorium, and changes very little from "The S. S. Tenacity" to "The Brothers Karamazov." Finally in Vienna, one finds, in the Redoutensaal, made from the ballroom of Maria Theresa's palace, a theatre without proscenium, machinery or scenery, a theatre where the actor is frankly the actor. Here one has the culminating expression of the growing sense in Europe that, because the stage is so close to life in the presence of the living actor, it need not and it must not attempt to create the illusion of reality.

Through such a conception the theatre is freed once more to seek the Form of life.

KENNETH MACGOWAN.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

### A CORRECTION FROM MR. REINSCH.

SIRS: I wish to thank you for devoting so much of your valuable space to my modest little essay on Secret Diplomacy, in your number of 5 July which has just reached me. But I regret that the reviewer devoted most of his space to castigating me for my concealment of the negotiations leading up to the rupture of diplomatic relations between China and Germany. He might have found a very full account of them in my book on my experiences in China, published in February, 1922. There was nothing secret about these negotiations or in the results; they were equally creditable to China and America; . . . also, the negotiations in question should not be confused and classed with others with which they had nothing in common in method or spirit. I am, etc.,  
Peking.

PAUL S. REINSCH.

### NOW IT CAN BE TOLD.

SIRS: At last the cat is out of the bag. The old saw, that blood can not be extracted from a stone, has been vindicated, and by no less a person than the Right Honourable Reginald McKenna, Chairman of the London Joint City and Midland Bank, and formerly Chancellor of the British Exchequer.

Professor Nicolai in his book, "The Biology of War," written while the war was at its height, shows us how modern war inevitably results in slavery, just as in ancient wars the conquered nation was despoiled of its able-bodied men and women, who were carried away into slavery by the victors. As Mr. McKenna puts it, "An increased exportable surplus could only be obtained by extending her [Germany's] sale of manufactured goods. To do this in the teeth of the competition of other manufacturing nations she must work longer hours for less wages; she must cut profits; she must reduce her imports to the indispensable minimum. But her competitors will not consent to stand idle while they lose their trade. They will find themselves faced with growing unemployment and heavy trade-losses. They, too, will be compelled to reduce wages and cut profits. And thus Germany's effort to extend her foreign trade must be confronted with the opposition of the whole manufacturing interest of the rest of the world, and could only be successfully countered by a general lowering of the standard of life."

Some of our fellow-citizens who said the same thing before we entered the war and after the war are still in jail; although one or two of them have been pardoned. The theory probably is, that it is permissible wisely to proclaim the causes and effects of a fire after the event, but is decidedly criminal to try to prevent the fire by proclaiming the causes and certain effects thereof in time to prevent the calamity.

Mr. McKenna's frankness in pointing out the only possible way in which these enormous debts can be paid, will be somewhat embarrassing to those people who think it the height of treason to express the opinion that wars are engaged in for commercial reasons and to secure markets. The following quotation from his speech will be a hard nut for them to crack. "Repayment of the capital, however, would have been beyond even your capacity for a very long period, had it not been for the opportunity afforded by the war. . . . As you know, there arose then an inexhaustible demand in Europe for American goods, which led to an immense increase in your exports. Payment for these exports was largely made out of the proceeds of the sale of the stocks and bonds held in England and thus a capital-liability which had been growing for over two centuries was almost entirely discharged in a few years. We see then that a debt-nation may in certain circumstances pay off its foreign debt with remarkable ease and rapidity. The indispensable condition for such rapid repayment is that there should be an extraordinary demand for its goods, a demand which is a natural accompaniment of war, but does not exist in peace."

We owe an "international" debt of gratitude to Mr. McKenna for having confirmed what so many of us have already said, and for having stated so clearly where the weakness of our economic system lies. I am, etc.,  
New York City.

PHILIP G. AVERY.

### AN IRRELEVANT CONSIDERATION.

SIRS: One sees, every so often, new evidence of that pathetic concern on the part of producers of plays—and more especially of motion-pictures—to determine and satisfy the public's taste in the matter of endings. A motion-picture producer

who stands high in his profession has recently turned out two popular successes, both of which have "unhappy endings." Those critics who commented on these pictures in the press took occasion to notice this fact with a smirk of self-conscious pride that was rather naive. It was almost as though they said "Ha! We too can turn off highbrow stuff like the regular drama. Lookeee! We are going in for unhappy endings too, and getting away with it."

Now, while one would not wish to be put down as endorsing the sentiments of the young lady who, in warning her friend against "A Doll's House," said, "It's no play for children, my dear, or for anyone else, it has a very unhappy ending," neither would one wish to oppose anything that might brighten things up a bit in "this Piljian's Projiss of a mortal wale"; and this seems unlikely to be accomplished by a protracted period of movies which end according to a formula for unhappiness as rigid as is the present one for happiness ever after.

In fact, the point of view that regards an unhappy ending as something in the way of a commendable literary or dramatic *tour de force*, seems to me as beside the point as that which pokes fun at the regulation sweetness and light of most movie fade-outs. One may judge a movie as a representation of life, as a comment on life, or as a work of art. A motion picture that is a work of art is not merely a comment on or a representation of life; it presents and comments on those aspects of life which to the artist seem to hold dramatic significance, and any artist who knows his job, will know that those aspects are neither consistently dark nor consistently rosy. If one regarded a work of art as one regards life, and if one received from its contemplation the same sort of satisfaction, one might be expected to enjoy an actual murder as much as a performance of "Electra" or "Hamlet." It is only when an idea or an event is removed from actuality by its artistic presentation that one can derive from its contemplation that objective satisfaction which is aesthetic delight.

So long as audiences are over concerned with the outcome of a play or a motion-picture, just so long will they fail to derive from it that aesthetic pleasure which is proper to the art of the theatre; and so long as producers shape their endings according to some pre-conceived notion of what the public wants, just so long will they be in getting around to the point of concentrating on the production of pictures that shall move from beginning to end with the convincing inevitability of a work of art. I am, etc.,

New York City.

MORVEN MURRAY.

#### THE DEATH OF FALSTAFF.

SIRS: I have observed from time to time when attending theatrical performances the strange behaviour of some members of an audience when a funny man comes on the stage. After the first ripples of laughter over his appearance have subsided, the funny man usually begins to tell a joke. Before he has actually told any of the joke, however, some of the audience invariably laugh—not because they are still laughing at his appearance but because he is going to tell a joke. How do they know it will be a joke? Oh, they are quite sure of that because he is a funny man. Very often they are right. Occasionally they are wrong. It depends on the nature of the entertainment being offered.

Recently a well-known play by Andreyev about a clown showed us something of what Thomas Hood had in mind when he wrote:

"There's not a string attuned to mirth  
But hath its chord in melancholy."

The above thoughts are called forth by a perusal of Mr. Herman Simpson's letter in your issue of 18 October aenent Mr. Llewelyn Powys's article on Falstaff, which appeared in your columns on 27 September. Mr. Simpson is confident in the belief that Shakespeare had Falstaff come on the stage to enact the rôle of a funny man and nothing else. Mr. Powys pointed out that "for pathos, for understanding, for sheer beauty, few passages in the plays, nay in all literature, can be compared with the account of Falstaff's death."

Failing to concur with this view, Mr. Simpson asserts that "the fat knight died as he lived, without a trace of sentiment or sentimentality, of pathos or of love."

But did he even live entirely without any sentiment? Mr. Simpson may not be aware of what William Winter said—an acute Shakespearean critic, a man who is entitled to be quoted on the works of the Bard if he were not entitled to be quoted on anything else in the world. "Falstaff," Winter averred, "has also a touch of human tenderness. He inspires a sort of brute affection among his wretched companions, and for the Prince of Wales he certainly feels a passion of good-fellowship which amounts to love."

The issue upon which Mr. Powys and Mr. Simpson are at variance is twofold. First, there is the question, whether Shakespeare had "an indulgent love for Falstaff"; second, whether the death scene of this great character was intended to be purely humorous or sublime and pathetic. In respect to the first, it may be said that the Swan of Avon was nearly always very gentle towards evil. And he puts into the mouth of Henry V—who, according to Rolfe, was his ideal of a King—the words:

"There is a soul of goodness in things evil  
Would men observingly distil it out."

Hence it could not have been very hard for Shakespeare to have at least a liking for Falstaff, especially as William Winter says that the audience can not help having it either—"We like him, almost love him, in open and conscious defiance of instinct, knowledge, judgment, morals, and taste. . . . Not to like this clever and jolly old sinner is thoroughly impossible—unless to goodyism, which is a third sex and may be left out of the question. Without ever ceasing to know that he is a hoary scamp, we nevertheless find ease and amusement in his company, and somehow naturally prefer to look on the amiable side of him."

There remains to be considered what sort of death-scene Shakespeare wrote around the fat knight. Mr. Simpson berates Mr. Powys as being "totally blind" for not interpreting in a "ludicrous" light the following description of the death of Falstaff:

"So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet. I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees and they were as cold as any stone, and so upward, and so upward and onward, and all was as cold as any stone."

This is of course a rather mirth-provoking speech since it is spoken by the tavern hostess, a dame who is the patroness of Doll Tearsheet. But Mr. Powys—as charming an essayist as any we have in America to-day—does not gainsay its ludicrous quality. He marks its undertone of pathos. Surely the minor key is there as well. I am, etc.,

New York City.

PAUL G. GREGORY.

## BOOKS.

### INCUNABULA.

THE trouble with this book<sup>1</sup> is not so much in its matter as its manner. Poets exist not to give away the secrets of their art, but rather to practise their art; but in this era of cheap education and cheap everything, it has become the fashion to discuss every divine and impersonal act of creation as if it were a mere conjuring-trick. Mr. Robert Graves, who is himself a young poet of more than mediocre parts, has apparently concluded that it is better to let the public have now what it wants, and he has therefore filled a hundred and fifty pages with a discussion of everything connected with poetry, from the poetic vocabulary to the contents of the poet's mind. His main thesis in respect to the latter is that

a poet in the fullest sense is one whom some unusual complications of early environment or mixed parentage develop as an intermediary between the small group-consciousness of particular sects, clans, castes, types and professions among whom he moves—the rival sub-personalities formed in him by his relation to these various groups constantly struggle to reconciliation in his poetry, and in proportion as these sub-personalities are more numerous, more varied and more inharmonious, and his controlling personality stronger and quicker at compromise, so he becomes a more or less capable spokesman of that larger group-mind of his culture which we somehow consider greater than the sum of all its parts.

This is in itself an interesting theory, and if Mr. Graves had elected to discuss it alone, and in a spirit of serious scientific scrutiny, I should have no objection. But to tell the truth, he has nowhere attempted such a task. With the exception of a few pages wherein he brilliantly dissects Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" in the Freudian manner, to show how

<sup>1</sup> "On English Poetry." Robert Graves. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

this poem, apparently so impersonal and objective, is in part self-revelatory of the poet's infatuation for Fanny Brawne, and in part premonitory of his threatened death through consumption, the illustrations and exemplifications of this argument are drawn almost entirely from Mr. Graves's own works.

Now it is treacherously easy for an artist to take up a piece of work which he has written some time ago, and to ask himself the question, "What was in my mind when I did that?" but it is far harder for him to delve down into the work of others deep enough to see how certain events necessarily condition certain ways of expression; and Mr. Graves is neither enough of a psychologist nor enough of a philosopher to support his own argument completely. Instead, the utmost he attempts to do is to make his book as varied and readable as possible by interposing between passages of perfectly serious argument, fantastic scraps of verse of his own composition, bits of mistaken advice to young poets not to attempt the difficulties of *vers libre*, and disquisitions on "surface-faults" and the use of what he calls "putty," the same thing that others might call "padding." As a result, the book is interesting and readable; but I, for one, wish that its author had elected rather to confine himself strictly to one single line of argument, one main issue, rather than start on half a dozen different topics, and to dismiss each one of them as airily as if it could be dealt with in a paragraph.

One consequence of Mr. Graves's unfortunate manner is that his book will please no one but the poets themselves; and even many of these will be frightened away by its author's boyish dogmatism on points of scansion and by the publisher's ridiculous announcement on the cover that "this volume is a literary landmark of importance." Mr. Graves doubtless knows well enough, now that he has the advantage of looking at his work in cold print, that he has neither produced "a literary landmark of importance," nor even a highly logical and reasoned piece of poetical criticism; but the combined effect of his own personal aggressiveness of manner and his publisher's legitimate desire to push the volume, is likely to result in a mistaken impression among serious readers that his book is in itself worthless. It is far from being worthless, as the few sentences I have already quoted will perhaps show. The theory it attempts to uphold is in the main sound; the illustration from Keats is happily chosen and brilliantly exemplified; and the air of schoolboyish devil-may-care with which the whole book is put together, will irritate none but pedants. But whether through sheer carelessness or for some more serious reason, the main theory—which is, I think, both bold and sound—is never driven home.

The main cause of this defect seems to me to lie in the fact that Mr. Graves is still too young a man. He has made one or two happy discoveries, but has not yet arrived at the age of maturity, the age when the artist's work becomes more hard and outwardly more difficult of approach, in order to retain greater depth and richness within. At present his own early poetry appears to him rather like a beautiful pearl shell that he has picked up at the seashore, or like a bit of mirror in the hands of a child. He is tempted to rub at the shining surface, to see what, if anything, there is beneath. The trouble is that superficial rubbing will reveal nothing. The only way to discover pearls or quicksilver is not to rub, but to scratch and pry; and Mr. Graves has not yet learned how to scratch and pry. Or, to end my metaphor, he must toil and suffer at

his task for at least ten years longer, before he can prove to the world that he is either a great critic or a fine poet.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

#### THE CURSE OF EMPIRE.

On the jacket of his most recent book, "The Northward Course of Empire,"<sup>1</sup> there is a sketch of Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson's career which will perhaps interest those of us who are given to theorizing about the pioneer-impulse. It is stated here that the first ambition of the polar explorer was to become a poet, that as an undergraduate he read "nearly all the English poets and those in two or three other languages," and wrote verse for the college magazines. At twenty-five, he went from the University of Iowa to Harvard to study comparative religion, but swerved as suddenly from this interest as he had from his brief, youthful devotion to art. As postgraduate student and teacher of anthropology, he devoted himself to science for several years. Finally, when an opportunity came to visit the Far North as a field-investigator in his specialty, he bifurcated into the scientist and the man-of-action.

Here again we have an example of the fate of the creative temper when it is born too close to a frontier. The egress from dreams is so wide, and the current towards a life of action so strong, that the young artist's exploration of tradition and of his own heart ends almost as soon as it has begun. In less than twenty years, the student of versification and comparative religion is writing a book that urges men of affairs to colonize the arctic circle, to domesticate the musk-ox and to establish trans-polar commerce by air. The promised land of ideal human relationship, fertilized by a living art and religion, has become "the North, the greatest potential grazing area of the world."

But I do not grieve that Mr. Stefansson became a great explorer instead of a minor poet, nor do I accuse the New World of a malicious conspiracy to thwart the young-artist. Bread and meat come first, of course, and all honour to those who produce or organize the production of these things. One's imagination can not but be kindled by the fire of Mr. Stefansson's as he pictures a world populated up to the edge of the polar seas. I like to read about fat and unclaimed land where strong men now geared to luxury-producing machines may profitably grow food for themselves and many others. Furthermore, it is perfectly credible to me that these dreams of Mr. Stefansson's about the domesticated musk-ox and trans-polar commerce by aircraft or submarine may be fulfilled. I do not blink the necessity or scoff at the possibility of reclaiming still more of the wilderness. What I resent in Mr. Stefansson's life and in this most absorbing book is the inference that organizing the means of living is the chief end of man.

A great many people are beginning to be rather surly about inventions and rumours of invention, about discovery and prophecies of discovery—things that used to fill us all with such breathless wonder a while ago. I confess that my hand itches for a half-brick every time I pass the strident horn of a radiophone. This magical purveyor of utter puerilities has become for me a symbol of the tendency of the times to debase creative effort to the level of a startling ingenuity at which the crowd may gape. Fascinating as it is to read of Mr. Stefansson's audacities of achievement and prediction, one lays down the book with a feeling of irritation. Time was when men ran away to tropic isles or polar solitudes to escape the paraphernalia and blundering human relationships of what is called civilization. But Mr. Stefansson is all for spreading these things thick up to the ultimate frontier. The radio and the phonograph and the moving-picture machine may yet beguile herdsmen of musk-oxen through the long polar night!

If we must have explorers and pioneers to follow explorers, then let them be as engaging personalities as the author of "The Northward Course of Empire." A great

<sup>1</sup> "The Northward Course of Empire." Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.00.

many persons who place on their self-edited Index books of travel and accounts of exploration would find Mr. Stefansson's books very well worth while the time it takes to read them. I would prescribe them for the cerebrasthenia produced by a long, unvaried diet of the very modern novel. Mr. Stefansson is no more given to seeing man as a hero than is Mr. James Joyce, so the reader need fear no injury to his dearest disillusionments. Furthermore, Mr. Stefansson is intelligent; he writes in a vivid, straightforward style that is free from literary clichés, journalistic jargon and scientific slang; and he dramatizes his material with an amazing skill. Then, too, he is so persuasive that the most bored victim of the vast material developments of the Western World will rally for the moment his dying interest in man's exploitation of nature.

EDWARD TOWNSEND BOOTH.

#### A POLITICAL DIAGNOSIS.

IN the beginning was Boom-town. The most widely-read novel of recent years has familiarized us with the idea that at the bottom of our literary, artistic, intellectual backwardness is Gopher Prairie, with its narrow cupidities, its dollar democracy or microscopic plutocracy, its repellent mental inanity, its ostracism of every variation from the norm. Similarly, in his study of Mark Twain, Mr. Van Wyck Brooks has traced the dominant tendency in American letters—the repression of the man of genius, his reduction to the normal—to its roots in the Pioneering Age and the Gilded Age, each equally narrow, all-engrossing, intolerant, exclusive. We are therefore not surprised to find that when the author of "The Mirrors of Washington" turns from the analysis of political personages to the analysis of political tendencies,<sup>1</sup> he too should make Boomtown the starting point for his observations and reflections.

If every society must have its heroes and hero-worship, Boom-town conformed to the rule. In the days when business was local and one single-track unrelated railway connected Podunk with Pohick, the local factory-owner, railway-builder or banker was the hero of the neighbourhood. It was he who "put the town on the map," attracted working people to it, provided the general store with customers, raised the price of real estate. He was the fountain of everybody's prosperity. It was he who built the fine house that was shown to visitors with pride, and it was he who had the biggest say in the local government. It is needless to add that local taxation weighed rather lightly upon him.

Then came the day of consolidation. The local railways were thrown together into vast systems of transportation, the local factories and mines were combined into large corporations and trusts. Banks, railways, mines, factories came under unified control. The same bankers sat in the boards of the railways and of the industrial combinations. Interlocking directorates created a nation-wide organization of business, dominated by a few conspicuous personalities; and to give the public a chance to participate in the new flood of wealth, Wall Street started its printing presses going at full speed.

The psychology of the local-industry period carried over into the period of national industry. The new magnates were merely the old local magnates magnified. "The whole country became one vast small town," and the new magnates became its leading citizens. "What had been a matter of experience on a small scale, was a matter of belief on a large scale." When these great ones prospered, everybody prospered. But when everybody sinned against economic law, overextended and overspeculated, and thus brought on business depression and financial panic, it was these men who met in council and brought order out of chaos, for they "lived on intimate terms with economic law and understood its mysterious ways and enjoyed its favour, as their great possessions testified."

In this era of the rise of big business, the Government at Washington occupied a place in the popular

consciousness similar to that of the small town. It maintained a small police force, called an army and navy. It put down strikes when they became too violent or interfered with the mails. It made customs-tariffs advantageous to big business. For the rest, however, it was told rather severely to let well enough alone. To make sure that it would do so, the great men openly took possession of it. Mark Hanna, Aldrich, Cannon, Knox, Root—nobody was so innocent as not to know for what and for whom these men stood. There was no "invisible Government" then; on the contrary, it was seen of all men and concurred in by the majority at the polls. It seemed most natural that the men who were making the country rich should work their will freely at Washington. Woe to the politician who presumed to interfere with their freedom of action! Union labour was a public enemy, while child labour was a blessing and benefaction. The businessman illusion is the typical American illusion. "In any other country a business man is just a business man; in America he is a demigod." The business man himself becomes a victim of the illusion. When Henry Ford went to Europe to get the boys out of the trenches before Christmas, he merely acted under the American illusion concerning the omnipotence of business. Middle class?—the American people is dominated by middle-class ideas and ideals, but the middle classes in other countries are not subject to this illusion.

Then came the Roosevelt episode. There were of course those, and they constituted a considerable minority, who did not approve of the absolutism of big business. Roosevelt gave tongue to their feeling by shouting, "Malefactors of great wealth!" while writing to Harriman for an extra-large campaign-fund, and assuring him that "you and I are practical men." The comic-opera revolution he wrought in the Government is described as follows:

Senator Aldrich and Speaker Cannon would call at the White House and tell the President just how far he could go and no farther. They would emerge. A moment later the press, in response to a summons, would arrive. Mr. Roosevelt would say: 'I have just sent for Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Cannon, and forced them to accept my policy.' Nobody was deceived.

Owing to his alliance with Bryan, President Wilson had to pay heed to the demands of the mere millionaires, and even threw some sops to labour (which the courts have mercifully taken back). The war greatly emphasized the tendency to subject business to governmental control; but while the end of the war and the general revulsion of feeling against the autocratic President gave him a weak successor, business has not regained its old sureness. Centres of great wealth have arisen in the West, New York has ceased to be the all-inclusive financial centre, and—ominous portent!—Henry Ford is flouting "economic law," paying the highest wages, giving the most to the consumer for his money, and without monopoly or special privilege is growing ever richer. The puzzling situation after the war, the bewilderment of both Government and business, is amusingly summed up in the following words, attributed to a discerning politician:

One bunch of fat boys with high hats and morning coats comes to Washington. The Administration holds out its nose, wishing to be led. The fat boys decline the nose. They are not leading anybody. In deprecatory manner they say: 'Please drive North. We think that is the way.' They go. The next day another bunch of fat boys in high hats and morning coats arrives. Again the offer of the nose. Again the declination. And this time: 'Please drive South. We're sure that is the way.'

The incapacity of both Government and business in dealing with the mining- and railway-strikes could hardly be characterized more aptly. Business is uncertain and divided. The Executive is weak, not merely because of native disposition, but chiefly because there is no sure guiding force to depend upon. The absolutism of the war is past, the absolutism of business is broken. Minorities begin to assert themselves. The farmers' bloc comes to the front; it demands low railway-rates for farm-products, a shifting of the tax-burden from the farmers to other groups of the population, governmental credits in

<sup>1</sup> "Behind the Mirrors: The Psychology of Disintegration at Washington." Author of "The Mirrors of Washington." New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.

aid of the farmer. Mr. Roosevelt's "malefactors of great wealth" are horrified,—special interests are seeking to dominate the Government! But our author is not horrified. On the contrary, he regards the appearance of the farmers' bloc as the most hopeful sign in Washington: "We had created an organization too vast for anyone to take in hand. . . . A way out of the difficulty has been found through the seizing of power by occupational organizations, of which the farm-bloc is the most famous and most successful." And he assumes, "as every one in Washington does," that the farm-bloc is only a forerunner of other similar economico-political groupings. When the farmer, the labourer, the business man votes for legislators who will represent primarily his special interests, "self-government will assume a new importance, even though all the interests will have to be subordinated to the general interest for the sake of co-operation with a party in the choice of an Executive." The farm-bloc arose first for the reason that agriculture is the single interest, or the preponderating interest, in many States; the other economic groups will follow in its footsteps, and these groupings will have a more solid reality than the geographical groupings, or States, contemplated in the Constitution. "The United States has become a union of the States of Agriculture, Labour, Manufacturing and a dozen other occupational States of greater or less importance." The new groupings will achieve their aims by means of log-rolling, an excellent American tradition. There will be a gain through the direct representation of the real interests of society in Congress, there will be a gain through the decentralization of power.

Is this the happy ending for which our author, like the good American author that he is, strives so valiantly? But before the war, this was precisely the political situation in practically every country of Europe, where the landed interest, the manufacturing interest, the labour interest, each had its special delegation in the legislature. Surely not a very exhilarating prospect! Our author is aware of the objection, and, tongue in cheek, he replies: Well, there is Einstein!—a new theory of the universe, the indubitable forerunner, according to some learned German, of a new civilization!

Einstein and the farmers' bloc!—the farmers' bloc and a new civilization! But, pray, why not Einstein and the Russian revolution?

HERMAN SIMPSON.

#### SHORTER NOTICES.

A VALUABLE educational work may be done upon certain Americans by getting them to read a translation of such stories as that of Johannes Buchholz.<sup>1</sup> It is a sugar-coated story of a fairy godmother to a village; but it is made interesting by some good character-drawing and a naturalistic picture of a Danish "small town." This picture should reveal to those Americans that the spirit of Gopher Prairie is to be found in Europe as well as in America, and that the cause of the phenomenon is neither the mere smallness of the town nor its remoteness from centres of culture, but the low, utilitarian ideal of life held by its inhabitants. The boosters of Main Street find their counterpart here in Lund and his colleagues who, trying to make of the little town of Knarreby a tourists' resort, are willing to sacrifice its natural beauty. American novelists might observe that the author does not write as a sociologist. He is telling a story, and is interested in his characters; they matter to him, so he is able to make them matter to his readers. Egholm, the eccentric, shattered dreamer, Sivert the irresponsible, Fors the untutored genius, are all real people; and the scene which shows the last-named standing alone in the pulpit of the church and playing his violin is one that lives in the mind. Buchholz has studied Ibsen and remembers Hedda Gabler. The opening situation with Hedvig and Poulsen awaiting Fruen, is very like the opening of the great Norwegian's play; but the effect is dissimilar. Clara Van Haag is exotic, as is Hedda; but she is a good angel for all that. The heroine exists for the plot, and hence is poorly drawn, but not so the others. There is a body to his portrayal of them that suggests that the author has not merely analysed them in order to know them thoroughly, but that he has performed a synthesis before presenting them to us. The book may be sentimental, but it is also graphic.

J. L. T.

<sup>1</sup> "The Miracles of Clara Van Haag," Johannes Buchholz. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

WHY is it that a volume called "One-Act Plays by Modern Authors"<sup>1</sup> should present (with one exception) none but plays written by English, Irish or American writers? It seems a pity to lose so good an opportunity to introduce American readers and students to work that has been done by European authors; for instance, to the one-act plays by the new Italian school, a group which seems temperamentally fitted to give the intensity and unity of effect so essential to this dramatic form. The exclusion of so much suitable material may, however, be in part the answer to a second query: Why is the quality of the works selected so uneven, and why should several markedly inferior plays be included with such masterpieces as "The Riders to the Sea," "A Night at an Inn," "The Little Man" and "Spreading the News"? That this exclusion is not a sufficient answer is proved by the fact that not only are there no plays by European dramatists (except the play by Maeterlinck alluded to above), but that among the five plays by Americans are two, "Beauty and the Jacobin" and "Gettysburg" which are much below the average; and that American plays which could stand comparison with the best, such as Susan Glaspell's or Eugene O'Neill's, are not included. The editor's lack of discrimination is indeed flaunted in the reader's face when in the introduction to the book she couples Lady Gregory's delicious comedy, so crisp and crystalline in dialogue, so swift and so inevitable in action, with this very "Beauty and the Jacobin," a play lacking all characterization, wordy, and dependent for its climax on a theatrical trick. Each play in the book is preceded by a brief description, and a biographical sketch of its author; and the whole is prefaced by an introduction with sub-divisions on the "Workmanship of the One-Act Play," "Theatres of To-day," "The Theatre in the School," etc., of the textbook type.

M. L. M.

#### A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

IT was with the utmost satisfaction that I observed how accurately and firmly Mr. Louis Untermeyer, in a letter to the *Nation* the other day, put his finger upon the purpose of parody and upon the distinction between parody and burlesque. "The most significant purpose that parody can achieve," says Mr. Untermeyer, "is criticism"; and he goes on to remark that it is the critical function which distinguishes parody from burlesque. This is admirable. The distinction corresponds pretty closely to the distinction between cartooning and caricature. Cartooning as practised by Leech, Tenniel, du Maurier and their successors, and in this country by Mr. Boardman Robinson, has the same essential purpose as parody, and its practice is governed by laws essentially similar to those that regulate the practice of parody. Caricature, on the other hand, is quite in the nature of burlesque, and serves the purpose of burlesque. But now since Mr. Untermeyer sees this distinction so clearly, and since he has a practical interest in parody, it seems to me that he may be the very one to do *con amore* a most interesting and pleasant bit of literary work that I have long had in mind to put some one up to doing; and if my suggestion comes under his notice, I hope he will give it consideration enough to bring out all its possibilities.

ONCE or twice lately I have suggested that our critics, especially those who are dissatisfied with the showing that American literature has made, might profitably go back and sift that literature more closely. The producers of anthracite coal are now making huge money out of washing the culm-dumps that they have hitherto regarded as sheer waste; and since the invention of the Woelfle table, the silver-mining companies have saved an immense amount of values that formerly went to waste. I am convinced that if our critics would put certain American writers through the washeries, or over the Woelfle tables, they would get enough literary salvage to pay them well for their trouble. I have already mentioned Henry George; well, again, there is Thomas Paine. Let some one approach Paine, not by the regular avenue, but walk all round him, survey him at every point, approach him wherever he is approachable, and see what would come of it. By approaching Artemus Ward a little off the conventional point of approach, one could write an essay on him that would show a very different value in Ward, and a much higher and more nearly permanent value, than

<sup>1</sup> "One-Act Plays by Modern Authors." Edited by Helen Louise Cohen. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.00.

anyone in this country, as far as I know, has yet suspected. Mr. E. S. Nadal has just died, leaving a very slight bulk of literary work behind him; yet slight as it is, I believe that something extremely interesting could be said about it.

THE trouble has been hitherto, I think, in this very matter of the conventional approach. Critics keep to the conventional approach, regardless of the obvious fact that quite often the significant thing about a literary life, and the truly important and preponderating thing, is its by-product. A playwright is judged by his plays, a poet by his poetry, a novelist by his novels; yet perhaps the thing which has the highest significance for the best reason and spirit of man is not in these, but in something else, something that the critic, through too intense preoccupation with the plays, poetry, novels, lets go undiscovered. The real Goethe, as I have often remarked, is not at all in his own written work; it is in the conversations recorded by Eckermann. One careful reading of Goethe is enough; except for the first part of Faust, one never need go back to him. But the "Conversations" one must read and re-read as long as one lives—*felix ille*, as Erasmus said of the Bible, *felix ille quem in hisce litteris meditantem mors occupat!* After French and German and Italian criticism had been for some time busy with Amiel, it remained for the English critic, Arnold, to point out his actual significance, which had been left quite unconsidered, and to remark how important it is. "The Sacred Books of the East" is an imposing monument of scholarship, but in point of actual significance for the best reason and spirit of man, I would joyfully trade it for the thin little volume of exquisite romance called "Deutsche Liebe" which not many, I think, have read; and if I were making a critical estimate of Max Müller, it is in this little book and not in the monument of scholarship that I should find my mainstay.

So what I would like to suggest to Mr. Untermeyer is that he should get out his Woelfle tables and pass over them an American writer who is known exclusively, I think I may say, as a poet and novelist. As a poet and novelist, I do not regard this writer as entitled to high rank, and neither, I am sure, would Mr. Untermeyer so regard him. In fact, it is to save Mr. Untermeyer a groan of impatience that I am thus artfully suppressing this writer's name until I have finished saying about him such things as I think might provoke Mr. Untermeyer's curiosity. Among many poems, a few of which have merit, and many novels, some of which are still readable, this writer sandwiched in a small volume of parody which has quite gone out of notice. It contains parodies upon the principal novelists of the Victorian period—Dickens, Disraeli, Charles Lever, Victor Hugo, Dumas, Reade, Charlotte Brontë, Miss Braddon, Mrs. Wood, Wilkie Collins, and so on. I think it might interest Mr. Untermeyer to prove that this disparaged literature of ours at which latter-day critics mournfully turn up their noses, has produced the greatest of parodists; and I believe that he can do it. Laying down the principles of parody, its canons of taste and style, making comparisons against the field in every point of architeconics, critical insight, tone and temper, I believe that he could make out a very strong case for the thesis that in Bret Harte this country is possessed of the best of parodists.

THE volume is called "Condensed Novels"; I mention it in the hope that readers who are desirous of knowing the best that American literature can do, in all departments, will search it out and bestow a careful and appreciative study upon its superb workmanship. I have no intention of forestalling Mr. Untermeyer, but only of communicating to him, as far as possible, my own enthusiasm. In view of what Mr. Untermeyer has said about the purpose of parody, would it not be interesting to show, as possibly might be shown, that Harte was essentially not a poet or novelist, but a critic; and to bring out such evidence as is available that if the circumstances of his life had been different, he would have been an able and powerful critic? Apart, too, from the fascination of the task, would it not be in a somewhat higher sense a satis-

faction to be the means of putting Harte in this place of honour, if the place be his? None but a really good critical mind, a mind of first-class openness and flexibility, could cover Harte's large range of parody with such faultless precision; as, for instance, to give the preface to "Les Misérables" a turn like this—

As long as there shall exist three paradoxes, a moral Frenchman, a religious atheist and a believing sceptic; as long, in fact, as booksellers shall wait, say twenty-five years, for a new gospel; as long as paper shall remain cheap, and ink three *sous* a bottle; I have no hesitation in saying that such books as these are not utterly profitless.

—and at the same time to do the parody on Dickens's "Haunted Man," which must be read entire—it does not lend itself to quotation—or the following, from the parody on "Jane Eyre":

Blunderbore Hall, the seat of James Rawjester, Esq., was encompassed by dark pines and funereal hemlocks on all sides. The wind sang weirdly in the turrets and moaned through the long-drawn avenues of the park. As I approached the house I saw several mysterious figures flit before the windows, and a yell of demoniac laughter answered my summons at the bell. While I strove to repress my gloomy forebodings, the housekeeper, a timid, scared-looking old woman, showed me into the library.

I entered, overcome with conflicting emotions. I was dressed in a narrow gown of dark serge, trimmed with black bugles. A thick green shawl was pinned across my breast. My hands were encased with black half-mittens worked with steel beads; on my feet were large pattens, originally the property of my deceased grandmother. I carried a blue cotton umbrella. As I passed before a mirror, I could not help glancing at it, nor could I disguise from myself the fact that I was not handsome.

Drawing a chair into a recess, I sat down with folded hands calmly awaiting the arrival of my master. Once or twice a fearful yell rang through the house, or the rattling of chains, and curses uttered in a deep, manly voice, broke upon the oppressive stillness. I began to feel my soul rising with the emergency of the moment.

"You look alarmed, miss. You don't hear anything, my dear, do you?" asked the housekeeper nervously.

"Nothing whatever," I remarked calmly, as a terrific scream, followed by the dragging of chairs and tables in the room above, drowned for a moment my reply. "It is the silence, on the contrary, which has made me foolishly nervous."

The housekeeper looked at me approvingly, and instantly made some tea for me.

I drank seven cups; as I was beginning the eighth, I heard a crash, and the next moment a man leaped into the room through the broken window.

ONE matter upon which Mr. Untermeyer would be bound, I think, to comment, is Harte's unerring judgment in the choice of subjects; and a study of this leads one out to an interesting conclusion. The subject of successful parody must have body enough to stand the strain. Slight stuff will not parody, though too many parodists seem unaware that it will not. One great reason why Sir Owen Seaman's parodies are no better than they are, is because so much of the stuff that he parodied is characterless. A serious examination of Harte's parodies can not fail, I believe, to lead to an increasingly respectful re-examination of the writers whom he parodied. Two of his parodies, those on T. S. Arthur and Belle Boyd, have a non-literary interest; but the interest of the others is purely literary, and they throw an extremely favourable light upon their subjects. It has been the fashion for some years, especially in academic circles, to regard the Victorian novelists as rather slim pickings; but Harte's parodies show them to be anything but that. They show them to be, within the unescapable limitations of their time and circumstances, pretty fairly big figures. They have weaknesses, eccentricities, and Harte never misses a single one; but they are the weaknesses and eccentricities of characterfulness, not of wishy-washiness. Thus I believe that if Mr. Untermeyer's literary curiosity could be stimulated to do a good turn for Harte, he would find himself led into doing an incidental good turn for Harte's subjects; and with literary standards where they are at present, I hope that Mr. Untermeyer would not regard this as wholly a waste of time.

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